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BY

JAMES COMPER GRAY,

*Author of "Topics for Teachers," "The Class and the Desk," &c., &c.*

OLD TESTAMENT.

VOL. VI.

Containing the Book of Psalms.

NEW YORK:
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# THE BOOK OF PSALMS.

# Introduction.

I. Title. Book of Psalms. (1) Called in the Heb., *Sepher Tchellim*, i.e. Bk. of Hymns, or Praises; (2) called in the LXX. *Psalmoi*, the Psalms = odes adapted to music (*psallo*, to strike a chord): (3) called in Syriac Ver. "the Bk. of the Psalms of David, the king and prophet;" (4) called also (by *De Wette* and others) "the Hebrew Anthology," *i.e.* a collection of moral. etc., poetry of the Hebrews. II. Author. Various. (1) *David* the principal composer. But not all the 73 to wh. his name is given in the Heb., nor all the 12 additional ones of the LXX. are by him (*e.g.* cxxii., cxxxix., whose Chaldaisms and style point to a later date); and Pss. ii. and xcv., not said to be his in either the Heb. or the LXX., are ascribed to him in N.T. (Ac. iv. 25, 26; Heb. iv. 7); (2) *Asaph's* name is assoc. with twelve (l., lxxiii.—lxxxiii.); (3) *Sons of Korah* said to have comp. eleven; (4) *Solomon*, two—lxxii. (of wh. he is prob. the subject) and cxxvii.; (5) *Moses*, one—xc. (the foll. 10 are also ascrib. to him by Jewish critics); (6) *unknown*—the anon. Pss. are ascrib. to var. authors (thus, the LXX. names Jer. for cxxxvii., and Hag. and Zech. for cxlvi. and cxlvii.). III. Canonicity. Has never been disputed. "They are freq. allud. to in the O.T., and are oft. cited by our Lord and His Aposs. as the work of the Holy Spirit" (*Horne*). IV. Arrangement. Coll. and arrang. by Ezra (B.C. 450), and prob. formed fr. smaller colls. They are div. into 5 Bks. in the Heb. and LXX. (1) Pss. i.—xli., chiefly by David, coll. by (?) Hezekiah, *see* Pr. xxv. 1; 2 Ch. xxix. 30. (2) xlii.—lxxii.: by Sons of Korah, xlii.—xlvii.; by David li.—lxv., lxxii. (3) lxxiii.—lxxxix.: by Asaph, lxxiii.—lxxxiii.: by Korah, lxxxiv.—lxxxix., mostly. (4) xc.—cvi. And (5) cvii.—cl. Liturgic, inclu. Hallelujah Pss. and songs of degrees, chiefly coll. for service of 2nd Temple. V. Special value. (1) *Models of devotion:* here man is speaking to God: in other parts God is speaking to man: (2) *Prophetic character*, esp. in relation to the Messiah: (*a*) His suffering, Pss. xvi., xxii., xl.; (*b*) His glory, ii., xlv., lxxii., cx.; (*c*) His connec. with David, lxxxii. *v.* 11; (*d*) His rejection by the Jews, cxviii. *v.* 22; (*e*) His ascension and gift of the Spirit, lxviii. *v.* 18: (*f*) the call of the Gentiles, cxvii., comp. Ro. xv. 10. VI. Rules of interpretation. (1) Ascertain author, historical origin, and scope; (2) Consider historical meaning of terms and allusions. From N.T. citations, or fr. tenor of Gospel, how to be applied to Christ, or His Church. VII. Literary excellencies. As national ballads of Jews, comp. with other national ballads. "An epitome of the Bible" (*Athanasius, Luther*). "A compend of theology" (*Basil, Bp. Hall*). "Not in their Divine arguments alone, but in the very critical art of composition they may be easily made to appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy incomparable" (*Milton*). "In lyric flow and fire, in crushing force and majesty, the poetry of the anc. Scriptures is the most superb that ever burnt within the breast of man" (*Sir D. K. Sandford*). "David yields me every day the most delightful hour. There is nothing Greek, nothing Roman, nothing in the west, nor in the land towards midnight, to equal David, whom the God of Israel chose to praise Him higher than the gods of the nations" (*Müller*).

# Synopsis.

*(According to Bickersteth.)*

## I.—Didactic Psalms.

1. Human character, happiness, and misery i., v., vii., ix.—xii., xiv., xv., xvii., xxiv., xxv., xxxii., xxxiv., xxxvi., xxxvii., l., lii., liii., lviii., lxxiii., lxxv., lxxxiv., xc., xcii., xciv., cxii., cxix., cxxi., cxxv., cxxvii., cxxviii., cxxxiii.
2. Excellency of the Divine Law..xix., cxix.
3. Vanity of human life..xxxix., xlix., lxix.
4. The duty of rulers..... lxxxii., ci.
5. Humility .....cxxx.

## II.—Psalms of Praise and Adoration.

1. God's goodness, mercy, and providential care of the good....xxiii., xxxiv., xxxvi., xci., c., ciii., cvii., cxvii., cxxi., cxlv., cxlvi.
2. God's power, glory, etc.....viii., xix., xxiv., xxix., xxxiii., xlvii., l., lxv., lxvi., lxxvi., lxxvii., xciii., xcv.—xcvii., xcix., civ., cxi., cxiii.—cxv., cxxxiv., cxxxix., cxlvii., cxlviii., cl.

## III.—Psalms of Thanksgiving.

1. Mercies to individuals ....ix., xviii., xxii., xxx., xxxiv., xl., lxxv., ciii., cviii., cxvi., cxviii., cxxxviii., cxliv.
2. Mercies to Israel..xlvi., xlviii., lxv., lxvi., lxviii., lxxvi., lxxxi., lxxxv., lxlviii., cv. cxxiv., cxxvi., cxxix., cxxxv., cxxxvi., cxlix.

## IV.—Devotional Psalms.

1. Penitence....vi., xxv., xxxii., xxxviii., li., cii., cxxx., cxliii.
2. Trust under affliction....iii., xvi., xxvii., xxxi., liv., lvi., lvii., lxi., lxii., lxxi., lxxxvi.
3. Extreme dejection, but not without hope, xiii., xxii., lxix., lxxvii., lxxxviii., cxliii.
4. Prayers in distress..iv., v., xi., xxviii., xli., lv., lix., lxiv., lxx., cix., cxx., cxl., cxli., cxliii.
5. Prayers when deprived of public worship.....xlii., xliii., lxxiii., lxxxiv.
6. Prayers seeking help in uprightness..vii., xvii., xxvi., xxxv.
7. Prayers in time of persecution, etc...xliv., lx., lxxiv., lxxix., lxxx., lxxxiii., lxxxix., lxliv., cii., cxxix., cxxxvii.
8. Prayers of intercession..xx., lxvii., cxxii., cxxxii., cxliv.

## V.—Psalms eminently prophetical..ii., xvi., xxii., xl., xlv., lxviii., lxix., lxxii., xcvii., cx., cxviii., mostly Messianic.

## VI.—Psalms historical....lxxviii., cv., cvi.

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NOTE.—Since the contents of the Pss. are so various, no exact classification can be made. Some arrange them under hymns in honour of God, of Zion and the temple, of the Messiah or King, plaintive or supplicatory, and religious odes, as Pss. xxiii., xci., cxix. Tholuck divides them according to their matter,—into songs of praise, of thanksgiving, of complaint, of instruction. An attempt has also been made (*see* Angus's *Bib. Handbook*) to classify the Pss. chronologically.

author,—uncertain

*a* "Three kinds of wickedness descr.—active participation in evil counsels,—quiet acquiescence in sin,—association with scoffers."—*Spk. Com.* "There is a glorifying righteousness of men in the world to come, and there is a justifying and a sanctifying righteousness here. The righteousness wherewith we shall be clothed in the world to come is both perfect and inherent. That whereby we are justified here is perfect but not inherent. That whereby we are sanctified is inherent but not perfect." —*Hooker.*

*b* Job xxi. 16.

*c* Pro. i. 22, iii. 34, xiii. 1.

*d* See Luther's trans.

*e Dr. Stanley*—It is found now only in the valley of the Jordan.

*f* Jer. xvii. 7, 8.

*v.* 1. *H. Stebbing*, ii. 357; *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, v. 90.

*v.* 2. *Dr. J. Edwards*, iii. 365; *Bp. Beveridge*, v. 384; *J. J. Blunt*, Hulsean Lec. 147.

*v.* 3. *Dr. H. Blair*, i. 58; *Dr. A. Rees*, ii. 305.

*g* Study.

*h Dr. Stoughton.*

*i* Hive.

## *PSALM THE FIRST.*

1—3. (1) blessed, *lit.* Oh, the happiness. counsel,[a] acc. to the custom, or advice of. ungodly,[b] wicked. scornful, aft. the manner of Solomon:[c] word does not elsewhere occur in Psalter. (2) but, *etc.*, the positive descr. folls. the negative. law, all of the Bib. then written: esp. Bks. of Moses. meditate, word used of utterance also.[d] (3) tree, as an oleander,[e] planted,[f] fixed, settled. season, consider the right time in life for bringing forth fruit unto holiness. prosper, *lit.* make prosper, bring to perfection.

*The Word of God* (*v.* 2).—I. The Word of God in the authority with which it comes to the believer. 1. It is law to the life in its mode of acting; 2. To the mind in its mode of thinking; 3. To the heart in its mode of loving. II. The Word of God in the feeling with which it is regarded by the believer. He delights in it—1. Because of the life which it reveals to him; 2. Of the counsel by which it guides him; 3. Of the promises by which it cheers him. III. The Word of God in the attention which it receives from the believer. 1. He privately studies and meditates upon it; 2. He speaks of it,—this is Luther's translation.[g]—*A good man like a fruitful tree.*—It is spring time. Around us are orchard trees in bloom, or with fruit about to form. A sight full of beauty, full of promise. See what the text says of the fruitful tree. I. *Where it grows.* Rivers of water. Needful to life of tree. The Bible, a well of water. The Gospel, a running stream. "There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God." The Sabbath, a quiet lake. The sanctuary, a pool of Bethesda. The good man will be near all these. II. *How it came there.* Planted. This is the work of another. "Ye are God's husbandry." "He brought this vine out of Egypt, and planted it." Providence plants us near the river. Grace teaches us to send the rootlets of thought, feeling, faith, down into the water. III. *What it yields.* Fruit. Such a tree should not bring forth leaves only. Barren fig tree. Fruit in his season. Different kinds of fruit in different times of life. But all good fruit. IV. *How to be like it.* Ask God to plant us by the river: to make us thirst for the water; to teach us to drink of the living stream. Then we shall presently be transplanted to the margin of the river of life. "Shall we gather at the river?"[h]

*How to read the Bible.*—It is said of Archbishop Usher, when he grew old, and spectacles could not help his failing sight, that a book was dark except beneath the strongest light of the windows. And the aged man would sit against the casement, with his outspread volume before him, till the sunshine flitted to another opening, when he would change his place, and put himself again under the brilliant rays; and so he would move about with the light till the day was done, and his studies ended. And truly we may say that our weak eyes will not suffice to make out the inscription on the page of nature unless we get near the window of Scripture, where God pours in the radiance of His Spirit. And wherever it shines, let us follow it, knowing that nowhere but in its illumination can we study the spiritual meanings of nature so well.[i]

4—6. (4) **ungodly**, *v.* 1. **chaff**,[a] worthless, light, void of good. **wind**, of temptation, trial, judgment. (5) **therefore**, for the righteous are *not* blown away. **stand**, or, rise up. (6) **knoweth**, approval and love implied. **way**, course of life, elements of character, designs, plans, etc.

*The final destinies of mankind* (*vv.* 5, 6).—I. The solemn event of the future judgment. 1. It is a certain event; 2. It is an important event. II. The different characters which it regards. 1. All the ungodly will be brought into judgment; 2. And all the righteous. III. The final destiny of saints and sinners. 1. The doom of the ungodly will be inconceivably dreadful; 2. The portion of the righteous will be ineffably glorious. Apply:—(1) The value of Divine revelation; (2) The necessity of self-examination; (3) The blessedness of being faithful unto death.[b]

*Reckoning at the judgment-day.*—What! do you think that God doth not remember our sins which we do not regard? for while we sin the score runs on, and the Judge setteth down all in the table of remembrance, and His scroll reacheth up to heaven. Item, for lending to usury; item, for racking of rents; item, for starching thy ruffs; item, for curling thy hair; item, for painting thy face; item, for selling of benefices; item, for starving of souls; item, for playing at cards; item, for sleeping in the church; item, for profaning the Sabbath-day,—with a number more, hath God to call to account; for every one must answer for himself. The fornicator, for taking of filthy pleasure; the careless prelate, for murthering so many thousand souls; the landlord, for getting money from his poor tenants by racking of his rents. See the rest: all they shall come like very sheep when the trumpet shall sound, and the heaven and earth shall come to judgment against them; when the heavens shall vanish like a scroll; and the earth shall consume like fire, and all the creatures standing against them; the rocks shall cleave asunder, and the mountains shake, and the foundation of the earth shall tremble, and they shall say to the mountains, "Cover us, fall upon us, and hide us from the presence of His anger and wrath whom we have not cared to offend." But they shall not be covered and hid; but then shall they go the black way, to the snakes and serpents, to be tormented of devils for ever.[c]

*a* Ps. xxxv. 5; Isa. xvii. 13.

Köster thinks that Pss. i., ii. are placed at beg. of Psalter bec. they present at once the two fundamental doctrines of Jewish Ch., the judgment of God, and the Messiah.

*v.* 6. *Bp. Kaye*, iv. 423.

*b Eta* in 400 Sks.

"Righteousness is God's first requirement and our first need. For this the hypocrite toils as he clothes his nakedness with filthy rags; for this the humble hunger and thirst; for this the law rages like the sea in a storm; and this in Divine perfection the Lord Jesus has wrought out, and brought in, and offered free." —*Arnot.*

*c H. Smith.*

## *PSALM THE SECOND.*

author,—prob. David

1—3. (1) **people**, peoples of many lands. **imagine**, meditate. **vain**, foolish, nought. (2) **set**,[a] attitude of defiance. (3) **bands**,[b] *i.e.* of Jehovah and Messiah; the bonds wh. unite them in purposes of justice, love, mercy, etc.

*The a heist and the Irishwoman.*—During the month of November, 1843, a clergyman and an atheist were in one of the night trains between Albany and Utica. The night being cold, the passengers gathered as closely as possible around the stove. The atheist was very loquacious, and was soon engaged in a controversy with the minister. In answer to a question of the latter as to what would be man's condition after death, the atheist replied, "Man is like a pig; when he dies, that is the end of him." As the minister was about to reply, a red-faced Irishwoman at the end of the car sprang up, the natural red of her face glowing more intensely with passion, and the light of the lamp falling

*a* As Goliath, 1 Sam. xvii. 6.

*b* Isa. x. 27; Jer. xxx. 8; Nah. i. 13.

*v.* 1. *Bp. Van Mildert*, Boyle Lec. 90; *Dr. R. Munkhouse*, iii. 133.

*vv.* 1—3. *J. Newton*, iv. 368.

*v.* 2. *J. B. Massillon*, 6.

directly upon it, and, addressing the clergyman in a voice peculiarly startling and humorous from its impassioned tone and the richness of its brogue, exclaimed, "Arrah, now, will ye not let the baste alone? Has he not said he was a pig? and the more ye pull his tail, the louder he'll squale." The effect upon all was electric; the clergyman apologised for his forgetfulness, and the atheist was mute for the remainder of the journey.[c]

*c Amer. Messenger.*

4—6. (4) **sitteth,** quietly, and with dignity on His throne. **laugh,**[a] fig. of the derision of the Eternal God. (5) **then,**[b] when the time comes. Silent contempt foll. by righteous indignation. (6) **King,** Messiah the Prince. **Zion,** the Ch., the seat and centre of His dominion.

*Christ's government in and over His people* (*v.* 6).—I. Jesus Christ is, by designation of the Father, a King to rule and govern all whom He hath redeemed. 1. He reigns in us, giving laws of life, working grace in the heart, imparting new supplies of the sacred Spirit, purifying the heart, creating peace, etc.; 2. He reigns over us, subduing all enemies, bestowing all blessings, sanctifying all conditions, settling all ecclesiastical polity. II. The kingdom of Jesus Christ shall be firmly established notwithstanding all opposition: there are three kingdoms opposed to it—Sin, Satan, and Antichrist; but Jesus can plant His sceptre where no earthly king can set his foot.[c]

*Christ equal with God.*—It was during the reign of Theodosius the Great, in the fourth century, that the Arians made their most vigorous attempts to undermine the doctrine of the Divinity of Jesus Christ. The event, however, of his making his son Arcadius partner with himself on his throne was happily overruled in the following manner, to his seeing the God-dishonouring character of their creed. Among the bishops who came to congratulate him on the occasion was the famous and esteemed Amphilochus, who, it is said, suffered much under the Arian persecution. He approached the emperor, and, making a very handsome and dutiful address, was going to take his leave. "What!" said Theodosius, "do you take no notice of my son? Do you not know that I have made him a partner with me in the empire?" Upon this the good old bishop went to young Arcadius, then about sixteen years of age, and, putting his hand upon his head, said, "The Lord bless thee, my son," and immediately drew back. Even this did not satisfy the emperor. "What," said he, "is this all the respect you pay to a prince that I have made of equal dignity with myself?" Upon this the bishop arose, and looking the emperor in the face, with a tone of voice solemnly indignant, said, "Sir, do you so highly resent my apparent neglect of your son because I do not give him equal honour with yourself? What must the eternal God think of you, who have allowed His coequal and coeternal Son to be degraded in His proper Divinity in every part of your empire!" This was as a two-edged sword in the heart of the emperor. He felt the reproof to be just and confounding, and no longer would seem to give the least indulgence to that creed which did not secure the Divine glory to the "Prince of Peace."[d]

*a* Ps. xxxvii. 13.
*b* Deut. xxix. 19, 20.
*v.* 4. *J. Newton,* iv. 379.
*v.* 6. *Dr. H. Killigrew,* 115; *Dr. E. Boys,* 51; *Dr. Harris,* i. 215; *Dr. W. Smith,* 131; *T. Boston,* i. 475; *E. Erskine,* ii. 515.
*c Dr. T. Temple* (1642).
"He that believeth truly in Christ, succoureth the poor members of Christ. He leaveth no man comfortless. He goeth about to hurt no man, but studieth to profit all men. He wisheth and procureth no less goodness to others than he doth to himself. For out of sincere faith cometh charity, insomuch that he which believeth truly in God can never be without it."—*Bacon.*
Queen Mary was so much attached to her beautiful Calais, that when, in the exigencies of war, she lost it, she affirmed in her grief that the name would be found written on her heart. The precious name of Christ will be found on every Christian's heart.
*d Dr. Jeffers.*

7—9. (7) **I,** *i.e.* the Messiah, who takes up the word of Jehovah. **decree,** by wh. I reign. **Son,**[a] this, the ground of His right to reign. (8) **ask,**[b] *etc.*, the Father's promise to the Son, now in

*a* Ac. xiii. 33; Heb. i. 5.
*b* Ps. lxxii. 8.

course of fulfilment. (9) break,[c] *etc.*, a picture of the utter overthrow of idolatry.

*The objects of Divine complacency* (*v.* 7).—I. Point out the uprightness of the people of God; of it there are four proofs. 1. Its internal character; 2. Its universality; 3. Its constancy; 4. Its moral rectitude. II. Some of the ways in which the favour of God is habitually manifested towards His people. 1. He pardons their infirmities and hears their prayers; 2. He improves and strengthens their religion; 3. He comforts them in their straits; 4. He separates the righteous from unjust reproaches; 5. He will crown them with grace and glory. Apply:—(1) Examine yourselves whether you are the people of God; (2) Dread the thought of being otherwise; (3) Let the true saint rejoice.

*Christ the power of God.*—Christ is called the power of God as well as the wisdom of God (1 Cor. i. 24). Not only in the fruits of the Gospel upon the hearts of men, but in His office, wherein was manifested the power of God in redeeming the world. It was in Him God tore up the foundations of the devil's empire, disarmed all the curses of the law, overthrew the false conceits of the world, knocked off the fetters of their captivity, demolished the power of death, snatched souls from the flames of hell, unbarred the gates of heaven, prepared everlasting mansions, laid His beams in the waters; the foundations of a happy eternity in the misery, afflictions, death, blood of His only Son. He restored man to glory by weakness; to wisdom by foolishness: He made the law lose its sting in the sides of Him whom it struck; took away our captivity by misery; flung death to the ground by death; quenched hell by its own flames; opened heaven by a cross; cemented an everlasting habitation by blood; and condemned sin by a sacrifice for it. By a crucified man, and a weak flesh encompassed with infirmity, the God of heaven subdues the god of the world, destroys the empire of the proud spirits, and subdues principalities and powers under His feet. It is seen in raising Christ from the dead, after He had sustained the weight of the sin of the world upon Him, and bringing Him forth with success and glory after that great encounter with the powers of hell; in powerfully raising a Church to Him from the seed of His blood, in spite of all spiritual and secular enemies, defending it and supporting it under the most terrible waves of the world, that He might be acknowledged, adored, and praised in this world, and that which is to come.[d]

10—12. Address of Psalmist who has heard the words of Jehovah, and Messiah. (10) wise, considerate, thoughtful. kings . . judges, all ruling powers, and authorities. (11) serve, sincerely. fear, bec. of His power. rejoice, in His merciful and beneficent rule. (12) kiss,[a] acknowledge. little, *lit.* for His wrath may suddenly, or, for an instant, kindle. (Then) blessed are they that trust, and find refuge in Him.

*Reconciliation to Christ* (*v.* 12).—I. The exhortation. It implies—1. Submission to Christ's authority (1 Sam. x. 1); 2. Love to His Person (Luke vii. 38); 3. Devotion to His service (1 Ki. xix. 18; Hos. xiii. 2). II. The arguments by which the exhortation is enforced. 1. The danger of disobeying it (Rev. vi. 15—17); 2. The benefit arising from obedience to it.[b]

*The all-sufficiency of Christ.*—All the good things that can be reckoned up here below have only a finite and limited goodness:

c Re. ii. 27, xix. 15.

*v.* 8. *Bp. Barrington*, 22; *Dr. A. M'Caul*, 308; *Dr. J. Brown*, 197.

*v.* 9. *J. R. Pitman*, 8.

Bishop Butler, the great thinker, was lying on his deathbed; and, so lying, he looked at his chaplain and said, "I know that Jesus Christ is a Saviour, but how am I to know that He is a Saviour to me?" The chaplain answered simply, "My lord, it is written, 'Him that cometh unto Me, I will in no wise cast out.'" The dying bishop was silent for a minute, and then he said, "I have often read and thought of that Scripture, but never till this moment did I feel its full power, and now I die happy." From the moment you believe in Christ, all the blessings of the new covenant are entailed on you.

*d S. Charnock.*

a 1 Sa. x. 1; 1 K. xix. 18.

*v.* 10. *S. Augustine*, vii. 78; *Dr. D. Fealley*, 93; *Bp. M. Smith*, 179; *Bossuet*, xvi. 77.

*vv.* 10–12. *R. Baxter*, xvii. 381.

b *G. Brooks.*

*v.* 11. *W. Scongal*, 173; *Bp. Beveridge*, ii. 522; *Abp. Secker*, ix. 193; *Dr. H. Blair*, i. 412; *Dr. A. Rees*, ii. 309; *J. H. Newman*, i. 341.

v. 12. *Dr. J. Donne*, ii. 186; *I. Pearse*, 243; *T. Scott*, iv. 141; *F. Trench*, 233.

some can clothe, but cannot feed; others can nourish, but they cannot secure; others adorn, but cannot advance; all do serve, but none do satisfy; they are like a beggar's coat made up of many pieces, not all enough either to beautify or defend. But Christ is full and sufficient for all His people; He ascended on high that He might fill all things (Eph. iv. 10), that He might pour fourth such abundance of Spirit on His Church as might answer all the conditions whereunto they may be reduced; righteousness enough to cover all their sins; plenty enough to supply all their wants; grace enough to subdue all their lusts; wisdom enough to vanquish all their enemies; virtue enough to cure all their diseases: fulness enough to save them, and that to the utmost. Over and besides, there is in Christ something proportionable to all the wants and desires of His people. He is bread, wine, milk, living waters, to feed them; He is a garment of righteousness to cover and adorn them; a Physician to heal them; a Counsellor to advise them; a Captain to defend them; a Prince to rule; a Prophet to teach; a Priest to make atonement for them; a Husband to protect; a Father to provide; a Brother to relieve; a Foundation to support; a Root to quicken; a Head to guide; a Treasure to enrich; a Sun to enlighten; and a Fountain to cleanse: so that as one ocean hath more water than all the rivers of the world, and one sun more light than all the luminaries in heaven, so one Christ is more all to a poor soul, than if it had the all of the whole world a thousand times over.[c]

Jesus sat at meat with publicans and sinners; and, blessed be God, it was not abstract, metaphysical sinners that He dined with; it was real ones—those whose sins came from the baser passions, and were abominable to all men, so that no man should say that it was not for such that He came.

c *Spencer.*

## *PSALM THE THIRD.*

author,—prob. David

*A morning Ps. for one in distress, associated with David, on the occasion of Absalom's rebellion.*

**1—5. (1) increased,** the Ps. seems inspired by hearing of one and another joining the rebellious party of Absalom.[a] (2) **no help . . God,** the bitterest feature of his trouble was that it brought dishonour *on God.* **Selah,** a guide-term for the musicians.[b] (3) **shield,**[c] as Ge. xvi. **for me,** or about me; defending me. **my glory,** in whom I joy, or boast. **lifter,** *etc.*, who I know will lift up my head.[d] (4) **cried,** better, cry incessantly. **his holy hill,** the heavenly Zion. (5) I, emphatic. This is my experience. **slept,** even the very night of the flight from Jerusalem. **sustained me,** better, *sustaineth*, does so continually.

*The troubles of the righteous* (*v.* 1).—From the superscription of this Psalm, we learn that it was composed on the occasion of David fleeing from his son Absalom (2 Sam. xv. 13—23): there is a beautiful contrast indicated. I. Trouble as contrasted with shield. II. Implied shame contrasted with Divine glory. III. Implied humiliation, contrasted with the lifting up of the head. IV. There is the lie of his enemies, who say there is no help for him in God, rebuked by the Lord hearing, sustaining, and inspiring his confidence.[e]

*Selah.*—The translators of the Bible have left the Hebrew word *Selah*, which occurs so often in the Psalms, as they found it. Summer, after examining all the seventy-three passages in which the word occurs, recognises, in every case, "an actual appeal or summons to Jehovah." They are calls and prayers to be heard, expressed either with entire directness, or if not imperative.—"Hear, Jehovah!" or "Awake, Jehovah!" and the like.—still earnest addresses to God that He would remember and hear, etc.

a 2 Sa. xv. 12, xvi. 15.

b "A word of doubtful origin, probably meaning, a sweep of harp strings marking a pause."—*Spk. Com.*

c "The hero accustomed to battle and victory lives and breathes in warlike thoughts and associations."—*Ewald.*

d Ps. xxvii. 6, ex. 7.

e "The title of this Psalm is as a key hung ready at the door, to open it, and let us in

The word itself he regarded as indicating a blast of trumpets by the priests. *Selah* itself he thinks an abridged expression used for *Higgaion Selah; Higgaion* indicating the sound of the stringed instruments, and *Selah* a vigorous blast of trumpets.[d] Dr. Addison Alexander, in his work on the Psalms, gives a more satisfactory explanation. He says, "This term occurs seventy-three times in the Psalms, and three times in Habakkuk. It corresponds to rest, either as a noun or a verb, and, like it, is properly a musical term, but generally indicates a pause in the sense as well as the performance. Like the titles, it invariably forms part of the text, and its omission by some editors and translators is a mutilation of the Word of God. In the case before us (Ps. iii. 2) it serves as a kind of pious ejaculation to express the writer's feelings, and, at the same time, warns the reader to reflect on what he reads, just as our Saviour was accustomed to say, 'He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.'" Again, on Ps. iv. 4, "The effect of this exhortation to be still is beautifully strengthened by a pause in the performance, *Selah.*"—*The pious soldiers.*—Soon after the surrender of Copenhagen to the English, in the year 1807, detachments of soldiers were for a time stationed in the surrounding villages. It happened one day that three soldiers, belonging to a Highland regiment, were sent to forage among the neighbouring farm-houses. They went to several, but found them stripped and deserted. At length they came to a large garden, or orchard, full of apple trees, bending under the weight of fruit. They entered by a gate, and followed a path which brought them to a neat farm-house. Everything without bespoke quietness and security; but as they entered by the front door, the mistress of the house and her children ran screaming out by the back. The interior of the house presented an appearance of order and comfort superior to what might be expected from people in that station, and from the habits of the country. A watch hung by the side of the fireplace, and a neat bookcase, well filled, attracted the attention of the elder soldier. He took down a book: it was written in a language unknown to him, but the name of Jesus Christ was legible on every page. At this moment the master of the house entered by the door through which his wife and children had just fled. One of the soldiers, by threatening signs, demanded provisions: the man stood firm and undaunted, but shook his head. The soldier who held the book approached him, and pointing to the name of Jesus Christ, laid his hand upon his heart, and looked up to heaven. Instantly the farmer grasped his hand, shook it vehemently, and then ran out of the room. He soon returned with his wife and children laden with milk, eggs, bacon, etc., which were freely tendered; and when money was offered in return, it was at first refused. But as two of the soldiers were pious men, they, much to the chagrin of their companion, insisted upon paying for all they received. When taking leave, the pious soldiers intimated to the farmer that it would be well for him to secrete his watch; but, by the most significant signs, he gave them to understand that he feared no evil, for his trust was in God; and that though his neighbours on the right hand and on the left had fled from their habitations, and by foraging parties had lost what they could not remove, not a hair of his head had been injured, nor had he even lost an apple from his trees.

to the entertainments of it. When we know on what occasion this Ps. was penned we know the better how to expound it."—*M. Henry.*

*e The Study.*

*f Bibliotheca Sacra.*

"As every flower hath its sweet smell, so every good action hath its sweet reflection upon the soul; and as Carden saith that every precious stone hath some egregious virtue; so righteousness is its own reward, though few men think so and act accordingly." — *F. W. Robertson.*

"A Christian's life, without any occasion for his lips telling it, should proclaim him to the world a child of God; so I have known an infant bear such striking resemblance to his father, that what his tongue could not tell his face did; and people, struck by the likeness, remarked of the nursling, 'He is the very image of his father.'" — *Dr. Guthrie.*

"The growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with us as they might have been is half owing to the number who lived faithfully a hidden life, and rest in unvisited tombs."—*G. Eliot.*

6—8. (6) **set themselves,** arrayed themselves for battle. This verse is "a quiet, meek expression of believing confidence. That God will protect him is pledged by the protection of the night."[a] (7) **arise,** *etc.*, confidence taking shape as prayer. **smitten . . bone,** denoting violence and humiliation.[b] **broken the teeth,** fig. taken fr. wild animals.[c] (8) **salvation,** fr. all kinds of trouble. **blessing is,** prefer, "Thy blessing *be* upon Thy people."

*Different views of salvation reconciled* (*v.* 8).—I. Salvation is of Jehovah. II. It is of Christ, but salvation must be applied, and here two things are requisite—the message and the conveyance, so that salvation is of—III. The Holy Spirit. IV. There must be faith. V. Connected with baptism. VI. It is ascribed to prayer. VII. Is connected with the ministry. VIII. Is laid at the door of our own responsibility. Observe the fourfold basis. 1. The infinite love of the Father ; 2. The obedience and sacrifice of Jesus ; 3. The operation of the Holy Spirit ; 4. The presentation of the Gospel.[d]—*Salvation*—The text is true in respect to salvation in every sense of the term. I. Temporally. II. Spiritually, the soul's salvation is of the Lord. 1. He is its author, prompted by His goodness, planned by His wisdom, wrought out by His power : 2. He is the finisher of it ; 3. He is the preacher of it. III. Physically, in the resurrection.[e]

*The Book of Psalms.*—"The Psalms is a theatre, where God allows us to behold both Himself and His works ; a most pleasant green field ; a vast garden, where we see all manner of flowers ; a paradise, where we see the most delicious flowers and fruits ; a great sea, in which are hid costly pearls ; a heavenly school, in which we have God for our teacher : a compend of all Scripture ; a mirror of Divine grace, reflecting the lovely face of our heavenly Father, and the anatomy of our souls."[f]

## *PSALM THE FOURTH.*

1—4. (1) **hear,** more correctly, *answer me.* **God of my righteousness,** or my righteous God.[a] **enlarged,** *etc.*, "thou didst make a broad place for me in the straits," in wh. I lay.[b] Ref. may be to Saul's persecutions. (2) **sons of men,** the Heb. term used signifies "men in high station," the leaders among his enemies.[c] **my glory,** his united and prosperous kingdom : including his personal honour. **leasing,** or lying.[d] (3) **godly,** the O. T. design. of the pious. (4) **stand in awe,** comp. Eph. iv. 26. True fear would restrain their violence. **commune . . bed,** "let the still night hours bring calmer, wiser thoughts."

*The great trials of life* (*v.* 1).—There are four aspects in which David is represented to us as a good man in great trial. I. Praying. In his prayer there is—1. A recognition of God's righteousness ; 2. A remembrance of God's goodness ; 3. An invocation of God's favour. II. Rebuking. It is marked by—1. Boldness ; 2. By alarm ; 3. By authority. III. Teaching. It presents us two grand subjects. 1. The universal craving of humanity ; 2. The only satisfaction of humanity. IV. Exulting. 1. God made him inwardly happy, even in his poverty ; 2. God made him consciously secure.[e]

5—8. (5) **offer,** *etc.*, this is best regarded as Dav.'s advice to his followers.[a] **sacrifices,** used here generally for relig. worship.[b]

*a* Delitzsch. Dav.'s extreme danger was past when Absalom's pursuit of him was delayed.

*b* 1 Ki. xx. 24.

*c* "To break the teeth of any one means to put an end to their power of doing harm." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*d* *Dr. J. Burns.*

*e* *The Study.*

From certain early Fathers of the Christian Church it would seem that in their times the Psalter was generally committed to memory; and that it was particularly expected ministers would be able to repeat the same.

*f* *Gerhard.*

author,— David

*This Ps. was prob. composed as an evening Ps., on the same occasion as Ps. iii.*

*a* "Thou, who maintainest my right and my cause. But not to be confined to this; it also means, Who knowest the righteousness, the sincerity of my heart and life."—*Peroune.*

*b* "A common salutation in Arabic is 'Space and ease to thee.'"—*Spk. Com.*

*c* *B, nly ish*, men in high station ; *B, nly adam*, men in low station.

*d* A. S. *leas*, empty, false.

*e* *Dr. Thomas.*

*f* "Though now

(6) who . . good? apply to Dav.'s followers, whose condition many regarded as desperate.[c] the light, *etc.*, wh. would abundantly cheer despondent hearts. (7) corn and wine,[d] this is said bec. shortness of provision was a chief cause of their distress. (8) in peace, even in the face of all the dangers of another night. *Both* should be rendered *at once;* as soon as I lie down calm sleep will come.

*The light of God's countenance* (*v.* 6).—What is the meaning of this prayer? I. That the mind is decided in seeking happiness in God alone. II. A desire to have a full manifestation of the Divine favour. III. That the mind seeks for clearer evidence of its reconciliation to God. IV. That the soul has already had such a taste of the blessing sought as to regard its full bestowment as the highest enjoyment.[e]—*The pursuit of happiness* (*v.* 6).—We have—I. The world's complaint and dissatisfaction. "Who," etc. Ask the question—1. Of experience; 2. Of revelation. Can Jacob tell us? or Job? or the rich man? The reason of the answer—No—is—(1) Conversation with incompetent advisers; 2. Still clinging to the same pursuits. II. We have the Christian seeking his happiness. 1. It is the highest kind of happiness; 2. It is sought in God; 3. It is totally independent of everything connected with this world. See next verse.[f]—*The two cries and the two answers* (*v.* 6).—I. The cry of the sons of men. It is the cry of—1. Emptiness; 2. Weariness; 3. Darkness; 4. Helplessness; 5. Earnestness; 6. Despair; 7. It is loud and universal. II. The cry of the sons of God. It is the cry—1. Of the few and not of the many; 2. It is a certain and definite cry; 3. It is a cry to go; 4. It is a cry for light; 5. A cry which will be answered.[g]—*Not afraid in the dark.*—Many children afraid in the dark. Why? The folly of this. The cure of this fear is trust in God. "The darkness and the light are both alike to Thee." This text reminds us—I. Of the good child's bedroom. Peace. Peace with God. Peace with conscience. Peace with parents, etc. II. The song with which the good child sings himself to sleep. Some children cry themselves to sleep night after night. The good child sings, and his song is: "Thou Lord only makest me dwell in safety." III. The guard who keeps the good child's bedroom door. The Lord. Watchful. Strong. Silent (Ps. cxxi. 3, 4). The most timid child would sleep sweetly, even in the dark, if he knew that his mother sat beside his couch. God's love is greater than a tender mother's (Isa. xlix. 15). We know a little girl who sleeps in a cot that is close to her father's bed. Very often when she wakes up in the night she says, "Papa, let me take hold of your hand," and then quietly falls asleep. Let us all try to put our hand into the hand of our heavenly Father.[h]

*Safety.*—When one asked Alexander how he could sleep so soundly and securely in the midst of danger, he told him that Parmenio watched; he might well sleep, when Parmenio watched. Oh, how securely may they sleep over whom He watcheth that never slumbers nor sleeps!—*Providential interpositions.*—The goodness or mercy of God is seen when it interposes for the help of man. The ravens, in a time of famine, bring Elijah bread and flesh (1 Kings xvii. 6). The story is known how Du Moulin, during the massacre of the Huguenots, in Paris, was cherished for a fortnight by a hen, which came constantly and laid her

excluded from the privilege of access to God's altar on Mount Zion, you may still offer the sacrifice of the heart." —*Wordsworth.*

*b* Comp. 2 Sa. xv. 7–9; and for the general application, Ps. l. 14, li. 19; De. xxxiii. 19.

*c* "The situation gives this the character of a despondent question arising fr. a disheartened view of the future."—*Delitzsch.*

*d* For joy of harvest and vintage seasons see Is. ix. 3; Je. xlviii. 33.

*e Evang. Preacher.*

*f Arch. Boyd, M.A.*

*g Dr. Bonar.*

The answer of a Christian sailor, who was not sure that he could swim, when asked why he remained so calm in a fearful storm, was, "Though I sink, I shall only drop into the hollow of my Father's hand; for He holds all these waters there." Another says, "My life hangs by a single thread; but that thread is in a Father's hand."

*h Hive.*

"There is virtuous fear, which is the effect of faith; and there is a vicious fear, which is the product of doubt. The former leads to hope, as relying on God, in whom we believe; the latter inclines to despair, as not relying on God, in whom we do not believe. Persons of the one cha-

racter fear to lose God; persons of the other character fear to find Him."—*Pascal.*
"It was wise advice of Sydney Smith, when he said that those who desire to go hopefully and cheerfully through their work in this life should "take short views;" not plan too far ahead: take the present blessing, and be thankful for it."—*Boyd.*
† *Crane.*

author,—David

*A morning Ps. before going to the house of God. Comp. by David when aware of secret plottings against him.*

*Nehiloth:*—an accompaniment of flutes.
*a* 1 Sa. i. 13; Ps. xxxix. 3.
*b* Ps. x. 16; comp. 1 Sa. viii. 7.
*c* "Every one that eateth and drinketh, and after that says his prayers, of him the Scrip. saith, 'But Me thou hast cast behind thy back.'" —*Talmud.*
*d* Eph. vi. 18.
*e Dr. Thomas.*

eggs where he was concealed. Also how at Calais an Englishman, who crept into a hole under a staircase, was there preserved by means of a spider, which had woven its web over the hole, and so the soldiers slighted the search there. It is related of Aristomenes that, being thrown for dead into a ditch along with others, he found his way out by means of a fox which came thither, and pointed a passage out. Lord Mountjoy, coming from Ireland, had perished, together with his ship's company, had not Providence wonderfully preserved them by means of certain seabirds. Camerarius relates how, in the time of a siege, when the inhabitants, who were sorely pressed by the Turks, placed a large store of bee-hives on the walls of the besieged place, and furiously tumbling down the hives on their enemies, the latter were so desperately stung, that in a pang of indignation they gave up the siege, to the inexpressible joy of the besieged Christians, who were holpen by these new and wonderful recruits![1]

## *PSALM THE FIFTH.*

1—4. (1) meditation, a scarcely audible utterance; like Hannah's.[a] A "murmur." (2) cry, when heart-thought gains utterance in prayer. my King, God was true King of Israel.[b] David only vicegerent. (3) morning, the sign of pious earnestness is beginning the day with God.[c] direct, *lit.* set in order, indic. careful preparation. look up, look out, in sense of "watching unto prayer."[d] (4) dwell, as if under Div. protection. "Evil cannot be guest of Thine."

*David's state of mind in relation to God and to society.*—I. His state of mind in relation to God. 1. His beliefs. He believed in God's—(1) Omniscience; (2) Holiness; (3) Righteous administration. 2. His feeling towards God. It was one of—(1) Personal interest; (2) Of earnest supplication: (3) Of practical expectancy. 3. His purpose towards God. (1) Early prayer; (2) Orderly prayer. II. His state of mind towards society. 1. He regarded all who are his enemies as enemies of God. (1) This is the common mistake of bigots; (2) The common persecuting spirit of bigots. 2. He regards all who were God's friends as his own.[e]

*Look up!* (*v.* 3).—"Look up!" thundered the captain of a vessel, as his boy grew giddy while gazing from the topmast. "Look up!" The boy looked up, and returned in safety. Young man, look up, and you will succeed. Never look down and despair. Leave dangers uncared for, and push on. If you falter, you lose. Look up! Do right, and trust in God.

5—7. (5) foolish, or the boastful,[a] stand,[b] as courtiers in presence of the King of kings. workers of iniquity,[c] Matt. vii. 23. (6) leasing, Ps. iv. 2. abhor, regard with detestation.[d] bloody, or murderous. Ref. may be to Ahithophel, the adviser of the Absalomic revolt. (7) house, or tabernacle. temple, applied to the sanctuary before Sol.'s temple was reared.[e] The word used here means, literally, *a palace.*

*David's resolution in regard to the house of God* (*v.* 8).—I. Observe the singularity of the resolution. II. Mark the object of the resolution: it regards the service of God in the sanctuary. III. The manner in which he would accomplish the resolution.

*a* Ps. lxxiii. 3, lxxv. 4, 5.
*b* Pr. xxii. 29.
*c* "Men who make evil their business or trade."—*Spk. Com.*
*d* Fr. Lat. *abhorrere*, to bristle, shiver from or at the presence of any one.
*e* 1 Sa. i. 9. iii. 3; 2 Sa. xxii. 7.

1. Impressed with a sense of the Divine goodness ; 2. Filled with holy veneration.*f*

8—12. (8) lead me, as a shepherd.*a* righteousness, "wh. is pledged to succour those who worship Him, and seek His guidance." enemies, *lit.* watchers. way straight, the way of Thy providential leadings make plain. (9) faithfulness, trustworthiness. inward part, their motive. throat, *etc.*, out of it comes moral putridness. flatter, *lit.* make their tongue smooth.*b* (10) destroy, or treat them as guilty. own counsels, wh. God may turn to foolishness.*c* (11) defendest, or *do thou shelter them.* (12) wilt bless, *lit.* dost bless. shield, *tsinnah*, Heb. for the large shield wh. covered the whole body.

*The righteous* (*v.* 11).—I. Observe the character of the righteous. 1. They are men of faith ; 2. They are men of love. II. The privileges of the righteous. 1. They have joy—great, pure, satisfying, triumphant, and constant ; 2. They have defence by power, providence, angels, and grace.*d*—*God's promise fulfilled.*—The Reformed Churches in France, whose history exhibits a series of the most atrocious perfidy on the part of their oppressors, were yet, whilst in the possession of the city of Rochelle and the free institutions of Protestantism, always too formidable for their enemies either to suppress their religion, or to subdue them as a body. The papacy, which everywhere, and at all times, seeks self-aggrandisement by destroying the liberty which Christianity ever upholds, seeing the vast importance of attaching Rochelle to its interests, made various attempts, through its tools, the reigning monarchs of France, to dispossess the Reformed Churches of this their stronghold ; and consequently it underwent several memorable sieges, the last of which occurred in the years 1627 and 1628, when, after a noble resistance, it finally surrendered to the besiegers, who demolished its fortifications, and confiscated its municipal rights. During this siege, which was endured with unexampled bravery, patience, and fortitude, and was protracted to nearly fifteen months, the inhabitants were reduced by famine to the misery of being obliged to have recourse to the flesh of horses, asses, mules, dogs, cats, rats, and mice ; and a single peck of corn is said to have been sold for a sum equivalent to about twenty-five pounds sterling of our money in the present day. To add to the horrors of this famine, which daily carried more than two hundred of the besieged into eternity, there were many instances of cruelty. There were also numerous examples of great and liberal generosity among the inhabitants ; of whom a merchant, named Thinault, and the Sieur Du Prat, distributed gratuitously a very large store of wheat to their suffering fellow-citizens, trusting to the hope of being repaid when better times should arrive. There were others who dispensed their charity so secretly that their names were never discovered ; and among the rest, the following example is narrated : "The Sieur De la Goute, an honorary king's advocate, had a sister, the widow of a merchant named Prosni, who, being a very religious and benevolent woman, at the time when the famine became more severe than it had before been, freely assisted the poor with her present surplus. Her sister-in-law, the wife of her brother De la Goute, being differently inclined, reproved her for her conduct, asking her in anger, 'What she would do when her all should be expended?' Her reply was, 'My sister, the Lord will provide for

*f W. Jay.*

*a* Ps. xxiii. 2, 3, xxxi. 3.

*b* "The climax appears to be,—their inner parts are a very place of destruction, their throat is a yawning sepulchral passage to it, their tongue is a smooth and easy entrance."—*Jennings & Lowe.*

*c* 2 Sa. xv. 31, xvii. 14, 23.

*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

There is a peculiar manifestation of the power of God in those that believe. All creatures manifest His creative power. Devils felt His power to punish. Angels display His power to govern and uphold in unsullied holiness. But only those who believe know the exceeding greatness and mighty working of His power to recover from a fallen state, and then to maintain. Here is at once a display of the power of His grace and the riches of His mercy.

A poor widow was weeping in the room where lay the body of her husband. Their only child came in, and said, "Why do you weep so, mother?" The mother told him of their loss, and especially referred to their poverty. Looking into her face, the little fellow said, "Is God dead, mother?" "The greatest

wrong you can do to God is to doubt His love. It is right to cherish great self-distrust, to realise your weakness and helplessness, but do not stop here. Confide as much more in God as you hope less from yourself."—*Madame Guyon.*

"Pantheism and idolatry naturally end in each other; for all extremes meet. The Judaic religion is the exact medium, the true compromise."—*Coleridge.*

me.' The siege was continued, and the famine increased its fearful ravages, and poor widow Prosni, who had four children, found herself in a great strait—all her store of provisions being exhausted. She applied to her sister for relief, who, in the stead of comforting, reproached her for her improvidence; tauntingly adding that as she had done mighty well to be so reduced under all her great faith and fine words that 'the Lord would provide for her,' so in good time He might provide for her. Wounded to the heart by these words, poor widow Prosni returned to her house in sad distress, resolving, nevertheless, to meet death patiently. On reaching her home, her children met her with gladdened hearts and joyous faces, and told her that a man, to them an entire stranger, had knocked at the door, it being late, and, on its being opened, he threw in a sack of about two bushels of wheat, and then, without saying a word, suddenly departed. The widow Prosni, scarcely able to believe her own eyes, with an overflowing grateful heart towards her gracious benefactor, immediately ran to her sister-in-law as quickly as her famished condition would allow, and upon seeing her exclaimed aloud, 'My sister, the Lord hath provided for me,' and saying no more returned home again. By means of this unexpected relief, conveyed to her so opportunely, she was enabled to support herself and family until the end of the siege, and she never knew to whom she was instrumentally indebted for this timely and merciful assistance."

## *PSALM THE SIXTH.*

**author,—David**

*The first of the penitential Pss. Comp. prob. in time of severe sickness. Many think it should be connected with Absalom's rebellion.*

*Sheminith:*—with a bass accompaniment.

*a* Kay.

*b* Matt. xxvii. 46.

*c* Compare Isaiah xxxviii. 18, 19.

*d* *Dr. Thomas.*

*a* Job xvii. 7; Ps. xxxi. 9.

A priest, by the name of John, is mentioned as having been rejected from the bishopric of Ravenna for inability to repeat the Psalms without a book. How often is the

1—5. (1) **O Lord,** Heb. *Jehovah.* **rebuke .. anger, the** Psalmist asks the entire removal of God's chastisement. Some comp. with Jer. x. 24.[a] (2) **weak,** exhausted, drooping as a blighted plant. **vexed,** perturbed, shaken. (3) **sore vexed,** John xii. 27. (4) **return,** to my relief. In suffering God seems to be absent, but is not.[b] (5) **death,** the climax of sickness.[c] The state after death was generally regarded by the Heb. as one of utter inactivity. **grave,** *Sheol,* the unseen world.

*A revengeful God the creation of a guilty conscience* (*v.* 1).—We make two remarks on David's idea of God's hot displeasure. I. It was generated in a guilty conscience by great suffering. Observe two facts. 1. That he was conscious of having wronged his Maker; 2. He was conscious of having deserved God's displeasure. II. It was removed from his guilty conscience by earnest prayer. True prayer does two things. 1. It modifies for the better the mind of the suppliant; 2. It secures the necessary assistance of the God of love.[d]

6—10. (6) **all the night,** or every night. **bed to swim,** a strong fig. for his constant weeping. **water,** drench, or flood. (7) **consumed,**[a] "as a garment fretted by moths." (8) **workers,** *etc.,* Ps. v. 5. **hath heard,** this change of tense indicates a renewal of confidence and hope. (9) **will receive,** the Psalmist felt sure that hearing pledged acceptance. *Receive* means favourably accept and regard. (10) **let all,** or better, *I know that all,* etc. **return,** or be turned back. Certain that his prayer is heard, he no longer fears his enemies.

*A man of prayer.*—Of Mr. Thomas Hooker, of New England, his biographer says, "He was a man of prayer;" which, indeed,

was a ready way to become a man of God. He would say, "that prayer was the principal part of a minister's work: it was by this that he was to carry on the rest." Accordingly, he devoted one day in a month to prayer, with fasting, before the Lord, besides the public fasts, which often occurred. He would say, "that such extraordinary favours as the life of religion and the power of godliness, must be preserved by the frequent use of such extraordinary means as prayer, with fasting; and that if professors grew negligent of these means, iniquity would abound, and the love of many wax cold." When he lay dying, a friend standing by his bed said, "You are going to receive the reward of all your labours." He replied, "Brother, I am going to receive mercy." [b]

body in a posture of prayer when the spirit is absent! "This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with their lips; but their heart is far from Me."

*b R. T. S.*

## *PSALM THE SEVENTH.*

author,—David

*Ps. of appeal to the Righteous Judge. Composed when suffering under slander.*

**1—6.** (1) **persecute** me, an expression connecting the Ps. with the time of the enmity of Saul. (2) **lest he,**[a] one person stood out prominently as leader among his enemies Prob. Saul is meant, but Dav. respectfully avoids naming him. **like a lion,** whose habits Dav. knew, 1 Sa. xvii. 34—37. (3) **done this,**[b] some specific charge was brought against him; prob. treason against Saul. (4) **rewarded,** or retaliated: better, "if I have injured my friend." **delivered,** with historical reference to 1 Sa. xxiv. 4—7, xxvi. 9.[c] (5) **let,** *etc.*, if indeed a *sinner* he was willing to *suffer*. **mine honour,**[d] personal and official dignity.

*Exemplary conduct under great social trial.*—David's conduct here includes three things. I. Earnest application. In which we see—1. Strong confidence in God; 2. A terrible sense of danger; 3. A deep consciousness of innocence; 4. An earnest invocation for help. II. Devout meditations. 1. On the character of God—(*a*) As a friend of the just; (*b*) As an enemy of the wicked. 2. On the condition of sinners—(*a*) As painfully laborious; (*b*) Abortively laborious. III. Reverent adoration. 1. The character in which he worships the Almighty. (*a*) As righteous; (*b*) As supreme. 2. The spirit with which he worships the Almighty.[e]

*a* Ps. xxxv. 15. *b* 1 Sa. xxiv. 12, 13, xxvi. 18. Comp. 2 Sa. xvi. 7, 8. *c* "And if I have plundered him who is without cause my enemy."—*Delitzsch.* *d* "The phrases 'tread down,' 'lay in the dust,' refer to a death of ignominy."—*Hengstenberg.* *e Dr. Thomas.*

**6—9.** (6) **arise,** *etc.*, I appeal fr. their slanders to Thee, as Judge.[a] **because of,** or *against*. **awake,** *etc.*, render "Awake for me. Thou hast commanded judgment."[b] (7) **so shall,** in that case, the case of granting me public vindication. **compass thee,** coming round Thee to acknowledge Thy righteousness. **return . . high,**[c] to Thy judgment-throne. (8) **judge me,** only conscious integrity could make such an appeal. Dav. refers to the crime with wh. he was charged, not to any absolute sinlessness.[d] (9) **wickedness,** of slander and plotting. **trieth,**[e] in specific sense of testing, assaying.

*A prayer for the cessation of sin* (*v.* 9).—I. Make a few observations on the wickedness of the wicked. 1. It is the genuine fruit of a depraved nature; 2. It displays itself in various forms; 3. It presses into its service the whole man; 4. It has abounded in all ages of the world. II. When may it be said that this wickedness comes to an end? 1. In the individual conversion of sinners to God: 2. It will come to an end generally, by the conversion of the world to God. III. That this is a most desirable object. 1. It is desirable on God's account; 2. On our own account; 3. For the sake of the wicked. IV. What means can be adopted to this

*a* Ps. xciv. 2; Is. xxxiii. 10. *b* Hitherto Dav. has protested his innocence; now in the full consciousness of that innocence he comes before the very judgment-seat of God, and demands the fullest and most public vindication."—*Perowne.* *c Revised Eng. Bible.* *d* "And awake for me: Thou hast indeed enjoined the maintaining of right."—*Hupfeld.*

end? 1. Give no countenance to wickedness; 2. Warn the wicked of their danger; 3. Pray that their wickedness may come to an end.*f*

*Christian integrity.*—An interesting instance of Christian integrity is recorded in the life of the late Rev. John Cooke, of Maidenhead. The circumstance has reference to property which had originally belonged to Mr. Cooke's mother, but had been illegally alienated from him by his father:—"A gentleman of very respectable appearance called at his house rather early one morning, and requested to see the Rev. Mr. Cooke. As soon as Mr. Cooke entered the room, he said, 'Sir, I am an entire stranger to you; and it is business of no very pleasant or ordinary kind that has brought me to Maidenhead. Some years ago, an estate was purchased by my father, for which an adequate value was given at the time; but,' continued the gentleman, 'I find on looking over the deeds, that although it has been in the possession of my family for many years, the sale is not valid, nor my title good, until it is signed by one John Cooke, who was, at the time of the sale, a minor. After much search, by the aid of my legal advisers, I have ascertained that you are that John Cooke: and now it depends on you, whether what my father honourably purchased, but your father dishonestly sold, shall continue in the possession of my family or not.' The gentleman then most frankly opened and exposed to Mr. Cooke a bundle of parchments containing all the particulars of the sale, with the deeds that had been executed. It is believed that the estate had greatly increased in value, and at the time of his application was worth between three and four hundred pounds per annum.

10—13. (10) my defence, *lit.* "my buckler is upon God."[a] (11) judgeth the righteous, better as marg. "God is a righteous judge." angry, or wrathful, wh. is right feeling towards the wicked. Angry, or "violently moved with indignation."[b] (12) turn not, in penitent submission. whet, sharpen.[c] ready, standing it up in act of shooting. (13) instruments of death, military weapons. his arrows, trans. "He maketh his arrows burning ones:" or lightning bolts.

*God's indignation against the wicked* (*vv.* 11—13).—We see the conduct of God—I. In His moral government here. 1. The righteous are the objects of His tender care; 2. The wicked are the objects of His merited displeasure. II. In His judicial proceedings at the last day. 1. Then He will approve and reward the righteous; 2. He will consign the wicked to merited shame and punishment. Learn—(1) The importance of ascertaining your real character; (2) The blessedness of having God for your friend.[d]

*A sure defence* (*v.* 10).—During the seventeenth century, while the Rev. John Cotton was minister of Boston, in America, intelligence reached that town of the distress of the poor Christians at Sigatea, where a small church existed, the members of which were reduced to great extremity by persecution. Mr. Cotton immediately began to collect for them, and sent the sum of £700 for their relief. It is remarkable, that this relief arrived the very day after they had divided their last portion of meal, without any other prospect but that of dying a lingering death; and immediately after their pastor, Mr. White, had preached to them from Psalm xxiii. 1, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

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*e* "Vindicate Thy dignity by no longer allowing it to appear as though the wicked were to have the upper hand."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"When Thou hast delivered Thy judicial sentence, return on high above the gathering of Thy people, to Thy heavenly throne."—*Wordsworth.*

*d* Ps. xviii. 20, 24, xxvi. 1; Job xxix. 14.

*e* Heart is seat of thoughts, reins of emotion.

*f Beta*, in 400 Sks.

*a* "He bears my shield, has undertaken to defend me."—*Jennings.*

Ps. lxii. 7.

*b* "The word means not merely that God feels, but that He manifests, wrath, not by occasional outbursts, but by continuous indications of His intent to punish those who continually provoke Him."—*Spk. Com.*

*c* De. vi. 7, marg., xxxii. 41.

*d C. Simeon, M.A.*

When Gregory was ordained bishop, the celebrated Jerome's inquiry respecting his canonical qualification was whether he knew the Psalms by heart.

**14—17.** (14) **travaileth,** *etc.*, fig. indic. that the bad resolves of the wicked man's heart, he was at this time trying to work out in mischievous acts. **falsehood,** "Heb. word includes the meanings of emptiness and failure."[a] (15) **digged it,** or hollowed it out. **is fallen,** *etc.*, historically illus. in Saul's personal peril in the cave (1 Sa. xxvi. 7—12), and in case of Haman. (16) **return,** *etc.*, the very scoopings out of the pit shall tumble down on him as he lies in the pit. **pate,** top of the head.[b] (17) **righteousness,** shown in his vindication.

*The saint's safety in evil times* (*v.* 14).—The words express the conception, birth, carriage, and miscarriage of a plot against David, in which you may consider—I. What his enemies did. II. What God did. III. What we should all do. His enemies' intention, God's prevention, and our duty. His enemies' intention,—he travaileth with iniquity, and conceiveth falsehood. God's intention,—prevention. He brought forth a lie. Our duty,—behold.[c]

*Retribution* (*v.* 15).—The end of this pope was a meet sequel to his life. Cæsar Borgia and the pope had plotted to poison a rich cardinal, that they might lay hands on his wealth. The whole body of cardinals were therefore invited to a banquet, and among the wines provided was one bottle of poison, carefully prepared and set apart. But the pope and his son coming in before supper, called for some wine, and a servant presented them, by mistake, with the bottle containing the poison. Borgia had largely diluted his wine, and being young and vigorous, he recovered under the use of proper antidotes; but Alexander died the same evening; a remarkable example of Divine retribution.[d]

## *PSALM THE EIGHTH.*

**1, 2.** (1) **our Lord,** the Psalmist speaks in the name of the Church. **excellent,** *lit.* bright, glorious: like the stars. **who . . heavens,** *lit.* "set Thy glory upon the heavens." Who hast covered the heavens with Thy glory.[a] (2) **babes,** child. able to play.[b] **sucklings,** unweaned infants.[c] Heb. weaned at three years old. **ordained,** or founded. "Thou hast built up a bulwark, a defence."[d] **enemy,** *etc.*, the opponents of the Div. sovereignty. **avenger,** "one who thirsts or breathes revenge."[e]

*The murder of the innocents* (*v.* 2).—I. Examine the occasion of the death of these innocents, with a few incidental remarks on the narrative. Describe the circumstances and scene. 1. How was it that such a destruction was permitted? For the punishment of the people of Bethlehem for their treatment of the infant Saviour. 2. Supposing this to be correct, does it not show the mercy of God as well as the justice? 3. However sin appears to prosper, it will not go unpunished even in this world. II. Make some practical observations on what has been said. 1. God's moral government is perfectly just; 2. And perfectly merciful; 3. Sin brings punishment.[f]

*Infant praises* (*v.* 2).—"A few Sabbaths since," says one, "a little boy, about six years of age, just after entering the school, came and asked me for the charity-box. I inquired what he wanted with it. 'I want to put a halfpenny into it,' said he. To examine his motives, and his knowledge of Divine things more

*a* "He conceives trouble or mischief, and when it is brought forth it turns out to be but a deception which does but mock its would-be perpetrator."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Etymology uncertain. Possibly Sanscrit *patri*, top of a vessel.

*c Dr. R. Sibbes.* Gregory, in the fifth century, writing to a woman by the name of Eustochium, concerning her deceased mother, Paula, says: "The Holy Scriptures she knew by heart. Indeed, I must say more, what perhaps to every one seems incredible, she also understood the Hebrew language so well that she sang the Psalms in Hebrew, even as we find it to be the case with her daughter Eustochium."

*d Lives of Popes* (*R. T. S.*).

**author,—David**

*A Ps. of praise to Jehovah, suggested by the sight of the starry skies. Comp. by David, prob. during his shepherd life.*

*Gittith*, a musical instrument from Gath: it was used for ps. of a *jubilant* character. Comp. Ps. lxxxi., lxxxiv.

*a* "Thou hast set Thy glory, *i.e.* hast stamped the image of Thine infinite majesty, upon the heavens and yet dost condescend to reveal Thyself to man by near and, to some, less signifi-

cant tokens." — *Spk. Com.*

*b* Jer. vi. 11, ix. 21; La. iv. 4.

*c* "So manifest are God's perfections that by very weak instruments He conclusively sets forth His praise." —*Fausset.*

Ma. xxi. 16.

*d Perowne.*

*e Mendelssohn.*

*f W. Alexander*, curate of Londonderry Cath.

*g Whitecross.*

particularly, I asked him what good he supposed it would do to put his money into the charity-box. 'I want to send it to the heathen,' he replied. 'Do you know,' said I, 'who the heathens are?' 'They are folks who have not got any Bible, and live a great way off.' 'What is the Bible?' 'The Word of God.' 'Of what use would it be to the heathen, if they had it?' 'It would tell them to love God, and be good.' 'Where did the Bible come from?' 'From heaven.' 'Was it written in heaven?' 'No, the prophets and good men wrote it.' 'If good men wrote it, how then is it the Word of God, and came from heaven?' 'Why, the Holy Ghost told them how to write it.' 'Did they see the Holy Ghost, and did He speak to them?' 'No, but He made them *think* it.' This was enough. I presented to him the charity-box; he dropped in his money; a smile of joy glowed upon his countenance; and he returned to his seat filled with the luxury of doing good."*g*

3—5. (3) when, or as often as. moon and stars, absence of reference to the sun fixes this as a *night* meditation. (4) man, lit. *frail man.*[a] (5) lower than the angels, Heb. *Elohim*,[b] wh. is never used in the sense of *angels*. glory and honour, the attributes of royal dignity; man being placed in authority over God's creation.[c]

*The Divine regard to man* (*vv.* 3, 4).—I. Take a summary survey of God's regard to man, and the visits with which He indulges him. 1. By visible manifestations of His presence; 2. By the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ; 3. By the influences of His Spirit; 4. By the dispensations of His providence. II. Inquire on what ground we may justify this profusion of bounty and regard to man. 1. What is man, viewed as a material being, and an inhabitant of this world only? 2. What is man, considered as an intelligent being and destined to be the inhabitant of an eternal world? 3. What is man, considered as a moral agent and a sinner? Expostulate with those who trifle with their souls; console those who enter into the designs of God.[d]

*The virtue of man* (*v.* 4).—

> O what is man, great Maker of mankind!
> That Thou to him so great respect dost bear;
> That Thou adornest him with so bright a mind,
> Mak'st him a king—and even an angel's peer?
> O what a lively life, what heavenly power,
> What spreading virtue, what a sparkling fire,
> How great, how plentiful, how rich a dower,
> Dost Thou within the dying flesh inspire![e]

6—9. (6) works . . hands, those summed up in the earthly sphere of creation.[a] (7) all sheep, *etc.*, rend. as marg. "Flocks and oxen all of them." The reference is to man's original estate. (8) passeth . . seas,[b] creatures of the deep not classed with fish. All are subject to man. (9) O Lord, *etc.*, repetition of *v.* 1, as the impression wh. the meditation had left.

*Modes of fishing.*—There is fishing with the hand-net. The net is in shape like the top of a tent, with a long cord fastened to the apex. This is tied to his arm, and the net so folded that when it is thrown it expands to its utmost circumference, around which are strung beads of lead to make it drop suddenly to the bottom. Then there is the great drag-net, the working of which teaches

*a* "The term points to the impotence and mortality of the creature who has been thus honoured."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

Ps. cxliv. 3—9.

*b* "Modern interpreters are generally in favour of translating the words thus:—'Thou madest him little less than God.'"—*Wordsworth.*

*c* Ge. i. 28.

*d Delta*, in 400 Sks.

"Who fights with passions and o'ercomes, that man is arm'd with the best virtue,—passive fortitude." —*Webster.*

*e Sir J. Davies.*

*a* 1 Cor. xiv. 24—27; Eph. i. 22.

*b* Ge. i. 20—25.

St. Basil directs that such as neglect to commit the Psalms to memory shall be shut up in solitude, or kept fasting, till they do. Another writer declares that "no one who claims the name

the value of united effort. Some must row the boat, some cast out the net, some on the shore pull the rope with all their strength, others throw stones and beat the water round the ends to frighten the fish from escaping there; and as it approaches the shore every one is active in holding up the edges, drawing it to land and seizing the fish. Again, there is the bag-net and basket-net of various kinds, which are so constructed and worked as to enclose the fish out in deep water. I have seen them of almost every size and pattern.[c]

of a monk, can be allowed to be ignorant of letters; moreover, he must know all the Psalms by heart."

c *Thompson.*

## *PSALM THE NINTH.*

author,—David

*A Ps. of thanksgiving after the defeat of foreign enemies. Comp. by David; prob. on conclusion of the Syro - Ammonite war.*

**1—5.** (1) show forth, recount, or declare.[a] marvellous works, the gracious ways in wh. God saves and protects His people. (2) sing, as the expression of joyfulness. praise, trans. psalms, in *Prayer Bk. Ver.* (3) when, or because. This is the subject of the thanksgiving. they shall, or because they fall, etc. at thy presence, on account of Thine angry countenance. (4) maintained, *lit.* executed my judgment. judging right, or in righteousness. (5) the heathen, should be *nations.* their name, as independent nations.[b]

*Praise* (*v.* 1).—I. Praise should always follow answered prayer. II. God should be praised for His mercies. III. To forget to praise God is to refuse to benefit ourselves. IV. To bless God for mercies received is a way to bless our fellow-men. V. Praise is the most heavenly of Christian duties.[c]

a Ps. xix. 1.

b Comp. De. ix. 14, xxv. 19; 2 Sa. xii. 31.

c *C. H. Spurgeon.*

**6—10.** (6) O thou enemy, better rend. *As for the enemy.*[a] destructions, *etc.*, or, "they are in ruins for ever," like Sodom, and Babylon. destroyed cities, or rooted them out. (7) endure, better, is calmly, securely seated. prepared, firmly established. (8) and he, none other than He, for He only is above all things; He only changeth, passeth, not. judge . . righteousness, or righteously judge. Observe the fulness of meaning St. Paul put into these words.[b] in uprightness, or equity; with impartiality. (9) refuge, *lit.* high place.[c] times of trouble, *lit.* "at times of desperation, *i.e.* on occasions when all hope is cut off."[d] (10) know, *etc.*, so know as to find full basis of trust (Jno. xvii. 3).

a "The enemy is cut off—they are perpetual ruins; and cities which Thou hast rooted out, — the very memorial of them is perished." — *Trans. by Perowne.*
Comp. Ex. xv. 4—6; De. xxxii. 26; Job xviii. 17; Is. xiv. 20.

b Ac. xvii. 31.

c "A fort on the summit of an inaccessible rock, such as often afforded a refuge to David in early days of exile, Comp. 2 Sa. xxii. 3; Ps. xci. 2."—*Spk. Com.*

d *Jennings and Lowe.*

*The name of God a ground of trust* (*v.* 10).—I. I will endeavour to show what the knowledge of the name of God imports. Not merely a knowledge of the different names by which He is called, but—1. His own essential perfections; 2. His diversified dispensations. II. How it will evince its existence in the soul. It will lead one—1. To renounce all false confidences; 2. To rely solely upon God. In order to this—(1) Study the Holy Scriptures; (2) Follow the example of Scripture saints.[e]—*The knowledge of God's name* (*v.* 10).—I. The name. It is one of—1. Greatness; 2. Grace; 3. Forgiveness; 4. Righteousness and holiness. II. The knowledge. III. The trust.[f]

e *C. Simeon, M.A.*

*Washington's confession.*—Thomas Mullet, Esq., an English gentleman, being in America, called on General Washington, at his residence at Mount Vernon, soon after the close of the contest between that country and Great Britain. Washington asked him, in the course of conversation in his library, if he had met with an individual in that country, who could write the history

f *Dr. Bonar.*
The old Clugniacs, when travelling, were wont to beguile the whole distance with chanting the Psalms, in order partly to

prevent evil thoughts and vain discourse. No weariness of the way, nor robber demonstration, could check this exercise. *g Dr. Cheever.*

*a* Comp. Ps. ii. 6. Ps. lxxvi. 3.
*b* Re. vi. 10; Ge. ix. 5.
"*Lit.* He who requireth, demandeth, satisfaction for bloodshed; like the Goël, the next of kin, who was bound to avenge the murder of his kinsman, so God calls the murderer to account." — *Perowne.*

*c* So *Delitzsch.*
*b Fausset.*
"Some think that David in giving thanks also therewith shows what he had prayed for even in the very anguish of distress. I am inclined to think, however, that he designedly prepared for closing with a prayer."—*Calvin.*
*c Kay.*
"While the thought of God's searching judgments gives confidence to the afflicted, it brings hidden sins to remembrance."—*Spk. Com.*
"We prefer to see here a parenthetical allusion to the troubles wh. Dav. suffered fr. the opposition of that ungodly party, whose injustice and violence evoke Ps. x."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

of the recent contest. Mr. Mullet replied that he knew of one, and only one, competent to the task. The general eagerly asked, "Who, sir, can he be?" Mr. Mullet replied, "Sir, Cæsar wrote his own Commentaries." The general bowed, and replied, "Cæsar could write his Commentaries; but, sir, I know the atrocities committed on both sides have been so great and many, that they cannot be faithfully recorded, and had better be buried in oblivion!"*g*

11, 12. (11) **in Zion**, this express. proves the Ps. to have been written after Dav. removed the Ark to Zion.*a* From Zion Jehovah's salv. is to be proclaimed to all the world. (12) **for blood**, God will surely avenge and rescue His persecuted Church, if persecuted even to martyrdom.*b* The verb used means "to demand back fr. any one that wh. he has destroyed, and therefore to demand a reckoning, indemnification, satisfaction for it." **humble**, those humbled by affliction.

*Humility in prayer* (*v.* 12).—The *Times* of June 23, 1858, in recording petitions presented to the House of Lords, remarked of one that it was rejected on the ground of an omission,—after all but a simple one,—the word "humble" was left out. Say, how many petitions to a higher tribunal are rejected for lack, not perhaps of humility in the words employed, but in the heart of the individual employing them?

13–16. (13) **have mercy**, *etc.*, the tone of complaint succeeds the former exultation in an unusual way. Sudden change of mood is quite a common feature of the Ps. This and the foll. *vv.* may however be the cry of the afflicted (*v.* 12).*a* **gates**, or regions; gates being the entrance, is put for the bounds.*b* (14) **gates . . Zion**, as the place of public concourse. (15) **heathen**, *etc.*, comp. Ps. vii. 16. (16) **is known**, hath made Himself known. **Higgaion**, the mark of an interlude: or the indic. of a joyous outburst of the stringed instruments.

*The cruelty of heathenism* (*v.* 15).—Mr. Leigh tells us, that while he was in the island of New Zealand, he was one day walking with a chief on the beach, and had his attention arrested by a considerable number of people coming from a neighbouring hill. He inquired the cause of the concourse, and was told that they had killed a lad, were now roasting him, and then intended to eat him. He immediately proceeded to the place in order to ascertain the truth of the appalling relation. Being arrived at the village where the people were collected, he asked to see the boy. The natives seemed much agitated at his presence, and particularly at his request, as if conscious of their guilt; it was only after a very urgent solicitation that they directed him towards a large fire at some distance, where they said he would find him. As he was going to this place, he passed by the bloody spot on which the head of the unhappy victim had been cut off; and on approaching he was not a little startled at the sudden appearance of a savage-looking man, of gigantic stature, entirely naked, and armed with a large axe. He was a good deal intimidated, but mustered up as much courage as he could, and demanded to see the lad. The cook, for such was the occupation of this terrific monster, then held up the boy by his feet. He appeared to be about fourteen years of age, and was half roasted. He returned to the village, where he found a great number of natives seated

in a circle, with a quantity of coomcry (a sort of sweet potato) before them, waiting for the roasted body of the youth. In this company was shown to him the mother of the child, who, with her child, were slaves, having been taken in war. She would have been compelled to share in the horrid feast, had he not prevailed on them to give up the body to be interred, and thus prevented them from gratifying their unnatural appetite.

17—20. (17) turned, or turned back.[a] hell, *Sheol*: not the place of punishment, but, more generally, the place of departed spirits; so a fig. for their death.[b] (18) not alway, comp. Is. liv. 7, 8. (19) man prevail, "there is an antithesis bet. the word *man*, wh. means *weak*, and his act of prevailing, wh. implies strength."[c] (20) put them in fear, make them realise their frail nature.[d]

*The wicked and their destiny* (*v.* 17).—I. The characters specified. 1. All those who wilfully violate the plain and positive commands of God; 2. All the persecutors of the people of God; 3. Hypocrites and impostors in religion; 4. All who are unregenerate. II. The affirmation made concerning them. 1. It describes the place of punishment; 2. The nature of the punishment; 3. The exquisite sense of punishment which the wicked will feel; 4. The companions of their punishment; 5. The perpetuity of their punishment. "The wicked shall be turned into hell." This shall be done—(1.) Unexpectedly; (2.) Suddenly; (3.) Irresistibly. The certainty of it may be inferred from—(1) The general consent of mankind; (2) The justice of the moral Governor of the universe; (3) From the unfitness of the wicked for any other situation; (4) The Bible.[e]—*The destiny of the wicked* (*v.* 17).—Who are the wicked? 1. Where else can they go? 1. Would themselves or the world be better by their living always on earth? 2. Is it possible that they can be annihilated? 3. Can they go to heaven? II. What else can they expect? 1. Consider, if one act of sin draw down the wrath of God, what must a life? 2. Consider His judgments on whole communities. III. What else do they deserve? 1. Did God ever prevent their seeking His forgiveness? 2. Has He not called, and they refused?[f]

*God remembers the needy* (*v.* 18).—A poor, but pious man, who was out of work, and, in consequence, suffered much distress, was cheered, however, on looking at the Society's *Penny Almanac* for the daily text. He read there, "The needy shall not always be forgotten," Psalm ix. 18. He left home on the strength of this promise, and went from place to place, during the day, but no work could he procure. He was tempted to say, "Surely the needy are forgotten." In deep distress of mind he was bending his course homewards, when he saw something glitter on the ground. He picked it up, and found it was a sovereign. This supplied all his necessities until he procured employment, and he then could gratefully rejoice in the faithfulness of God.[g]—*The Greenland missionaries.*—When the Moravian missionaries first went, in the last century, to labour in Greenland, they were called to endure the most painful and distressing trials, both in reference to the indifference of the heathen, and the want of food. Famine, of the most afflictive kind, almost constantly threatened them. But in the darkest hours God always appeared, in some way or other, for their help. On one occasion He disposed a Greenlander, a perfect stranger to them, to travel forty

God hears the heart, though without words; but He never hears words without the heart.

*a* Ge. iii. 19; Ps. xc. 3.

*b* "The meaning is, that even now, before the eyes of men, God's righteousness shall be seen in cutting off the wicked by a sudden and premature end, and helping and exalting the righteous."—*Perowne.*

*c Spk. Com.*

*d* "Place terror over them."—*Jerome.*

*e Beta*, in 400 Sks.

*f Stems and Twigs.*

"Where is hell?" was the question once asked by a scoffer. Brief, but telling, was the reply, "Anywhere outside of heaven."

*g Whitecross.*

"The way of fortune is like the milky way in the sky; which is a meeting, or knot, of a number of small stars, not seen asunder, but giving light together: so are there a number of little and scarce discerned virtues, or rather faculties and customs, that make men fortunate."—*Bacon.*

"Let not fortune, which hath no name in Scripture, have any in thy divinity. Let Providence, not chance, have the honour of thy acknowledgments, and be thy Œdipus in

contingencies."—*Browne.*
"The generality of men sink in virtue as they rise in fortune. How many hopeful young men, by a sudden accession of a good estate, have deviated into debauchery, and general looseness of life."—*J. Beaumont.*
*h R. T. S.*

Author,—uncertain

*A vision of judgment upon proud and prosperous, treacherous and cruel atheism. An anonymous Ps., but very suitable to the conditions of David's age. By many regarded as part of Ps.* ix.

*a Calvin.*
*b* "Through the pride of the wicked the lowly is hotly persecuted."—*Revised Eng. Bible.*
*c Jennings and Lowe.* So also *Ewald and Gesenius.*
*d Dr. Thomas.*

*a* "The other interp. wh. makes the words 'He (*i.e.* God) will not require' the words of the evil-doer, accords better with the clause following, and with *v.* 13."—*Perowne.*
*b Spk. Com.*
*c* "The present life is ordained for those who believe not, and they laugh the faithful to scorn."—*Koran.*
*d* Job xxi. 8; Ps. xvii. 14, xlix. 11.
*e* "So is the way of

leagues to sell them some seals, the flesh of which, with oatmeal and train oil, was a delicacy to them compared with the old tallow candles on which they sometimes lived. At another time, when they had just returned from a toilsome excursion, in which they could obtain no food, a Greenlander brought them word that a Dutch ship was lying at some distance to the south, the captain of which had letters for them. On sending to the ship, they found a cask of provisions sent them by a kind friend at Amsterdam, with the proposal to send more if they needed. At another period, they were returning home empty in their frail boat, when a contrary wind forced them on a desolate island, where they were compelled to remain all night. Here they shot an eagle and thus obtained food, and also quills for writing. And on another trying occasion, when greatly reduced, a Greenlander left them a dead porpoise, taken out of its dam. Thus did God keep them alive for their future extensive usefulness.[h]

## *PSALM THE TENTH.*

1—3. (1) why, *etc.*, not a complaining murmur, but the expression of an ardent desire. afar off, judging foreign enemies, and seeming unmindful of the crimes and troubles in the Psalmist's own land. hidest, winkest.[a] (2) the wicked, *etc.*, trans. "By reason of the haughtiness of the wicked, the afflicted burns," either with indignation, or with sorrow.[b] (3) boasteth, singeth praises. blesseth the covetous, better rend. "The plunderer renounces, [yea,] contemns Jehovah."[c]

*Man's cry* (*v.* 1).—This cry implies the belief that the distance is—1. Unnatural; 2. Undesirable. How can this felt distance be explained? There are only three sources to which we can look for light on the subject. I. Philosophy. 1. It may be that God is too great to allow man a close connection with Him; 2. That the case of the felt distance is God's method of agency. II. Speculative theology. 1. Because it is inconsistent with the immutability of the Divine character; 2. Because it is inconsistent with the moral excellence of God. III. Divine revelation. The Bible speaks of sin as the cause of the felt distance (Isa. lix. 2; Col. i. 21).[d]

4—7. (4) the pride, lit. *height of his nostril:* arrogant bearing. not seek, add after God. "He never troubles himself whether God approves his conduct or not."[a] thoughts, "their practical, perhaps only half-conscious atheism."[b] (5) far above, comp. Ps. xviii. 22. puffeth, bloweth at contemptuously, as if they were mere bubbles.[c] (6) never, Heb. unto generation and generation.[d] (7) his mouth, *etc.*, the cursing should be perjury, false swearing.[e] under his tongue, suggesting a store of venom.

*Pride of heart* (*v.* 4).—Through pride the wicked are not saved. I. Proud of their own merit, they will not call upon God. II. Proud of their own strength, they will not apply to God for help. III. Proud of their own wisdom, they will not submit to God's teaching. IV. Proud of their own happiness, they will not seek God's favour.[f]

*The vanity of pride* (*v.* 4).—Mahmoud, the first Mohammedan conqueror who entered India, when a mortal disease was con-

suming him, ordered all his costly apparel, and his vessels of silver and gold, and his pearls and precious stones, to be displayed before him. In the royal residence at Ghuznee, which he called the Palace of Felicity, he drew from this display, wherewith he had formerly gratified the pride of his eye, a mournful lesson, and wept like a child. "What toils," said he, "what dangers, what fatigues, both of body and mind, have I endured for the sake of acquiring these treasures, and what cares in preserving them; and now I am about to die and leave them."

8–11. (8) lurking places, ambush, places outside villages. villages, the Heb. word means *a covered place*, and the clause is better rendered "*He sits in a well-covered ambush.*"[a] poor, here the sad and sorrowful. (9) secretly,[b] in secret places. catch, in order to rob. This word changes the fig. from the lion to the hunter and his net. (10) croucheth, stoops to spring.[c] strong ones, either his claws, or his teeth. (11) hideth his face, *v.* 4. "The key-note of the bad man's refrain."[d]

*Religious cruelty.*—In 1534, Francis I. ordered an inquisition to be made at Paris against the Protestants; some of whom were discovered by informers, others apprehended on suspicion, and put to the torture, and both sorts burned, after a very barbarous manner; for, being tied to a pulley, they were drawn up a great height, then let down into the fire, presently after snatched up again; and, after torturing them in this manner for some time, the executioner cut the rope, and they dropped into the flames, and were consumed. Those who were thought to be more learned than the rest, had their tongues cut out, and were then brought to the stake and burnt.

12–15. (12) humble, as trans. *poor* in *v.* 9; the afflicted. (13) contemn, the same word is trans. abhorreth in *v.* 3, *despised*. (14) hast seen, comp. bad man's words, *v.* 11. "God is not the passive spectator of human affairs wh. these men deem Him." spite, *lit.* the impatience or fretting under suffering. requite, *etc.*, to set it in Thy hand, *i.e.* to make it the matter of Thy care. fatherless, the type of all the desolate. (15) break, *etc.*, shatter his strength.[a] seek out, in order to punish.[b]

*The power of a child's fidelity.*—A gentleman, some time ago, sent his two youngest children, with their nurse, to take an airing on the sea side. On the way, one of them fell down on his knees, and said to his nurse, "O Bell, I came away, and forgot to say my prayers." A young woman who saw him was conscience-struck, and thought, "Here is a babe rebuking me: when did I pray in all my life?" This simple means was the instrument which the Father of spirits was pleased to use to awaken her from the sleep of sin. She remained with the nurse and children all the time they were bathing; when she returned home, she sent for a Christian friend, that she might converse with him, and died, after lingering eight months in a consumption, with a firm trust in the Saviour.[c]

16–18. (16) is King, uttered in an exulting, triumphant tone. perished, comp. De. iv. 26.[a] (17) prepare, or establish, in the sense of strengthen and comfort; by imparting cheering convictions. (18) oppress, cause terror.[b]

*The Eternal King* (*v.* 16).—A King, one Jesus. 1. He reigns by Divine right. II. He reigns by the popular will. III. He

the wicked; when he wishes to deceive others, he swears copiously, that it may appear as if he swore with all conviction on his own part."—*Kimchi.*
*f W. W. Whythe.*

*a* "The places in wh. the robbers lurked rather than the places against wh. they plotted, seem to be indicated. Reference may be to nomad encampments of predatory Bedouins."—*Perowne.*
*b* "He lurks in the covert as a lion in his lair."—*Kay.*
*c* "As a lion gathers himself into as small a compass as possible to make the greater spring."—*Faussett.*
*d* Ps. xciv. 7.

*a* Job xxxviii. 15; Ez. xxx. 21, 24.

*b* "Thou shalt search out and punish his wickedness, until thou shalt not find aught to punish."—*Spk. Com.*

It is not until the flower has fallen off that the fruit begins to ripen. So in life it is when the romance is past that the practical usefulness begins.

*c R. T. S.*

*a* Also De. viii. 20; Jos. xxiii. 13, 16.

*b* "So that frail man, from the earth, may no more cause ter-

ror." — *Jennings and Lowe.*
"It is with Fortune as with fantastical mistresses—she makes sport with those that are ready to die for her, and throws herself at the feet of others that despise her." — *J. Beaumont.*
*c J. B. Pugh, M.A.*
"To be thrown upon one's own resources is to be cast in the very lap of fortune; for our faculties then undergo a development and display an energy of which they were previously unsuspectible." —*Franklin.*
"There is nothing keeps longer than a middling fortune, and nothing melts away sooner than a great one. Poverty treads upon the heels of great and unexpected riches." —*La Bruyère.*
"Brave spirits are a balsam to themselves; there is a nobleness of mind that heals wounds beyond salves." — *Carteright.*
*d R. T. S.*

author,— David

*A Ps. of confidence in circums. of personal peril. Comp. either in time of Saul (Ewald) or Absalom (Delitzsch).*

*a* "The advice here given is that of timid and despoiling friends, who would persuade him that all is lost, and that the highest wisdom is to yield to circumstances,

reigns by the right of conquest. IV. He reigns on earth and in heaven, and will reign for ever and ever.—*The people of God* (*v.* 17).—I. The experience which the Christian has of God's mercy and condescension in former instances of communion with Him. II. The character of those with whom God condescends to hold communion. III. The preparation of heart by which God enables them to approach him. IV. The encouragement which the experience of the past gives to continue stedfast in communion with God for the future.[c]—*Rev. G. Whitefield.*—When the Rev. G. Whitefield was preaching on one occasion at Plymouth, he lodged with Mr. Kinsman, a minister of the town. After breakfast, on Monday, he said to his friend, "Come, let us visit some of your poor people. It is not enough that we labour in the pulpit; we must endeavour to be useful out of it." On entering the dwellings of the afflicted poor, he administered to their temporal as well as spiritual wants. Mr. Kinsman, knowing the low state of his finances, was surprised at his liberality, and suggested that he thought he had been too bountiful. Mr. Whitefield, with some degree of smartness, replied: "It is not enough, young man, to pray, and put on a serious face; true religion, and undefiled, is this—to visit the widow and the fatherless in their affliction, and to supply their wants. My stock, it is true, is nearly exhausted; but God, whom I serve, and whose saints we have assisted, will, I doubt not, soon give me a supply." His hopes were not disappointed. A stranger called on him in the evening, who addressed him thus: "With great pleasure I have heard you preach: you are on a journey, as well as myself, and travelling is expensive. Do me the honour to accept this," at the same time presenting him with five guineas. Returning to the family, Mr. Whitefield, smiling, held out the money in his hand, saying: "There, young man, God has speedily repaid what I bestowed. Let this in future teach you not to withhold what it is in the power of your hand to give. The gentleman to whom I was called is a perfect stranger to me; his only business was to give me the sum you see." It is remarkable that this gentleman, though rich, was notorious for a penurious disposition; but Elijah was fed by ravens.[d]

## *PSALM THE ELEVENTH.*

**1—3.** (1) **flee**, prefer a plural form, *Oûirds*, and refer to Dav. and his company.[a] **your mountain**, the Psalmist needed no mountain, for his refuge was found, in God. (2) **bend**, *lit.* "are bending; nay, they have already aimed." **privily**, in secret. (3) **foundations**, of justice and right. The natural reference of this is to Saul, who, as king, was the foundation of justice, yet he was perverting justice by pursuing the innocent.

*The working of unbelief and of faith* (*vv.* 1—7).—In this Psalm we see, in a contrasted view—I. The counsels of unbelief. 1. It magnifies the difficulties we have to encounter; 2. It prompts to the use of unbecoming expedients. II. The dictates of faith and trust in God. 1. As an Almighty Sovereign; 2. As a righteous Judge. Address those who are—(1) Met with opposition in their Christian course; (2) Who are ready to faint by reason of spiritual conflicts. —*The believer and his foundations* (*v.* 3).—

Call attention to some two or three of "the foundations," or primary and essential doctrines of the Church's creed. I. The basis of the whole superstructure of the religion we profess: the inspiration and sufficiency of the Scriptures. II. The doctrine concerning Christ. III. The ministry of the Spirit.[c]

4—7. (4) holy temple, not that at Jerus., but the heavenly temple.[a] The Lord in heaven is the true King, and the foundation of justice. eyelids, perhaps bec. bent down in serious consideration. try, test, assay.[b] (5) soul hateth, a strong expression. We must not suppose God to hate the man, He can only be said to hate his wicked ways. (6) snares, some rend. *coals of fire*,[c] raining snares, or cords, is a somewhat extravagant poetical expression. horrible tempest, burning wind; the simoom; a blast of horror. (7) his countenance, lifted on them with grace and acceptance.[d]

*God-sent trials* (*v.* 5).—I. All events are under the control of Providence; consequently all the trials of our outward life are traceable at once to the great First Cause. II. The trials which come from God are sent to prove and strengthen our graces, and so at once to illustrate the power of Divine grace, to test the genuineness of our virtues, and add to their energy.[e]

*Mere morality* (*v.* 5).—How foolish and ignorant we should deem an artificer who, having taken a piece of iron, should melt and mould, file and polish it, and then imagine that it has become gold. It shines, it is true, but is its brilliancy a proof that it is no longer iron? And does not God require pure and refined gold, that is to say, a perfect righteousness and a perfect holiness? Say, ye sages of this world, shall any metal but that of the sanctuary find currency in heaven? Or shall God mistake what is false for what is genuine, and shall He confound the hypocritical outward show of human morality with that everlasting life which partakes of His own nature, and which the Holy Spirit alone implants within the soul which He has new created?[f]

## *PSALM THE TWELFTH.*

author,—David

*A Ps. of lament over prevailing falsehood.*

1—4. (1) help, save, O Jehovah! godly, or pious. ceaseth, dieth out.[a] faithful, stedfast in piety.[b] fail, are dispersed. (2) vanity, or untruth. flattering . . speak, trans. "Deceitful language do they speak with a double heart." double heart, Heb. *an heart and an heart*. (3) cut off, by sudden calamity. proud things, *Heb.* great, boastful things. (4) our own, *lit.* are with us, under our command.

*Practical atheism* (*v.* 4).—To illustrate this I will show—I The atheism of the heart. Who is the Lord over us—1. To inspect our ways? 2. To order our paths? 3. To supply our wants? 4. To call us to account? II. Let me proceed to show the folly of this. 1. It will not alter the state of things; 2. It will not alter the issue of things. III. Let me conclude with answering the question which is thus presumptuously proposed.[c]

5—8. (5) oppression, *lit.* for the laying waste of the afflicted. now, after what may seem to men a long silence. set . . him, render, "I will set (him) in the salvation for which he pants."[a] (6) words, with special reference to the Lord's *promises*, e.g. *v.* 5. furnace of earth, or furnace placed in the earth, so that it may

*a* He. ix. 24.

Temple is used with idea of *palace*.

*b* Ps. vii. 9, xvii. 3; Job xxiii. 10.

"It is interesting to observe how early and how strongly this thought took possession of Dav.'s heart."—*Spk. Com.*

*c Ewald.*

*d* Nu. vi. 25; Ps. xxxi. 16, lxvii. 1.

"Though this last part be diversely expounded, yet I doubt not but the natural meaning of it is, that God hath continual regard of the righteous, and never turns His eyes away from them."—*Calvin.*

*e C. H. Spurgeon.*

*f Dr. C. Malan.*

*a* Is. lvii. 1; Mic. vii. 2.

*b* "The honest and true-hearted, lit. who are stedfast, unchanged by the evil influences around them: men that may be relied on."—*Perowne.*

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*a* "The word used here means *to pant with desire*, not *to puff contemptuously*."—*Jennings & Lowe.*

*a C. Simeon, M.A.*

*c T. Preston, M.A.*

*b Wordsworth.*
*c* "In all directions advance the wicked; (it is) like the rising of a tempest upon the sons of men;' *i.e.* society is afflicted by outbursts of oppression from every quarter, wh. resemble the shifting gales of a tempest." — *Jennings and Lowe.*
*d Dr. Thomas.* Faith and works are the two oars of a boat. Row with the right oar alone, and the boat describes a useless circle on the water. Row with the left oar alone, and it merely goes in the opposite direction. But use both oars with equal force, and it moves swiftly and evenly forward. No words can describe the wonderful and continually enlarging blessings in Christ which have been poured into the souls of many of the children of God, through the simple, unreasoning faith which prays confidently and with ever unceasing trust.
*e Dr. Cheever.*

author, — David

*A Ps. of weariness and despair. Comp. during the persecutions by Saul.*

*a* "It is natural to a perturbed and doubting heart thus to express itself, in a confused and almost contradictory manner."—*Perowne.*

be heated to any intensity. seven times, or thoroughly. (7) them, the poor and needy. generation, or depraved class. (8) walk, or prowl about: omit *when.*[c]

*The moral degeneracy of society* (*vv.* 1—7).—This degeneracy appears in this Psalm in three aspects. I. As a fact for devout lamentation. 1. There is the absence of the true; 2. The presence of the false; 3. The exultation of the vile. II. As a reason for Divine interposition. This—1. Prayed for: 2. Divinely promised; 3. Heartily expected. III. As suggested by contrast, the excellency of God's Word. His words—1. Are unmixed with falsehood; 2. Have been thoroughly tested.[d]—*Quaker's house preserved.*—A most remarkable case occurred at the siege of Copenhagen under Lord Nelson. An officer in the fleet says:—"I was particularly impressed with an object which I saw three or four days after the terrific bombardment of that place. For several nights before the surrender, the darkness was ushered in with a tremendous roar of guns and mortars, accompanied by the whizzing of those destructive and burning engines of warfare, Congreve's rockets. The dreadful effects were soon visible in the brilliant lights through the city. The blazing houses of the rich, and the burning cottages of the poor, illuminated the heavens; and the wide spreading flames, reflecting on the water, showed a forest of ships assembled round the city for its destruction. This work of conflagration went on for several nights: but the Danes at length surrendered: and on walking some days after among the ruins, consisting of the cottages of the poor, houses of the rich, manufactories, lofty steeples, and humble meeting-houses, I descried, amid this barren field of desolation, a solitary house unharmed; all around it a burnt mass, this alone untouched by the fire, a monument of mercy. 'Whose house is that?' I asked. 'That,' said the interpreter, 'belongs to a Quaker. He would neither fight, nor leave his house, but remained in prayer, with his family, during the whole bombardment.' Surely, thought I, it is well with the righteous. God has been a shield to thee in battle, a wall of fire round about thee, a very present help in time of need."[e]

## *PSALM THE THIRTEENTH.*

1—6. (1) how long, here are really two questions. How long wilt Thou forget me? For ever?[a] hide thy face, comp. Job. xiii. 24. (2) take counsel, meditate plan after plan. having sorrow, or while sorrow is in my heart. daily, or in the day. (3) lighten, *etc.*,[b] the eyes that were dimmed with anxiety and sorrow. sleep the death, sleep an eternal sleep. (4) lest, *etc.*, such boasting would affect the Divine honour and faithfulness. (5) thy mercy, not in my merit. (6) sing, in anticipation of God's gracious ways with him.[c]

*Trust in God* (*v.* 5).—I. The nature of this important duty. 1. It is an enlightened confidence; 2. A universal confidence; 3. It is a holy confidence. II. The motives to its exercise. 1. The infinite wisdom of God; 2. His Almighty power: 3. His boundless goodness. Learn—(1) How miserable are they who have no trust in God; (2) How wise and happy the subjects of this trust.[d]

*The best light for the eyes* (*v.* 3).—When the Princess Anne, daughter of Charles I., who died on the 8th of December, 1640, lay upon her death-bed, and nature was almost spent, she was desired by one of her attendants to pray. She said that she was not able to say her long prayer, meaning the Lord's Prayer, but she would say her short one, "Lighten mine eyes, O Lord, that I sleep not the sleep of death." The little creature had no sooner pronounced these words than she expired: she was not quite four years of age.

## *PSALM THE FOURTEENTH.*

**1—3.** (1) **the fool,**[a] in Sc. always those who have cast off the fear of God. **heart,** not in intellect, but in the seat of thought and conviction. Rather a practical than a theoretical atheism. **corrupt,** Ge. vi. 11, 12. (2) **the Lord,** Jehovah. **looked down,** as before the flood. **understand,** their duty. (3) **all . . filthy,** lit. *rancid: see* Rom. iii. 10—12.

*The folly of atheism* (*v.* 1).—I. The assertion made, "There is no God." 1. The thing asserted. This may mean—(*a*) An absolute removal of the Divine being; (*b*) A removal of God's providence. 2. The manner of the assertion, in his heart, which implies—(*a*) An inward wishing that there was no God; (*b*) Seeking out arguments to prove that there is no God: (*c*) Readiness to agree with anything that seems to make for his opinion; (*d*) When one places his sole dependence on anything beside God. II. The person by whom it is made, whose folly will appear from the following reasons. 1. He contradicts the general judgment of mankind; 2. He adopts a principle that is at the best highly improbable; 3. The causes and motives inducing him to take up this opinion. (*a*) Great impiety; (*b*) Ignorance of nature and of natural causes. 4. From these cases his folly appears—(*a*) In the time of some great and imminent danger; (*b*) In the time of approaching death. Application:—Beware—(1) Of sin which makes the conscience raw and sick; (2) Of discontent with the providence of God; (3) Of devotion to pleasure and sensuality, there being nothing in the world that so casts out God from the heart.[b]

*The folly of atheism* (*v.* 1).—"But it is heroism no longer if the atheist knows that there is no God. The wonder then turns on the great process by which a man could grow to the immense intelligence that can know that there is no God. What ages and what lights are requisite for this attainment! This intelligence involves the very attributes of Divinity, while a God is denied. For unless this man is omnipresent; unless he is at this moment in every place in the universe, he cannot know but there may be, in some place, manifestations of a Deity, by which even he would be overpowered. If he does not know absolutely every agent in the universe, the one that he does not know may be God. If he is not himself the chief agent in the universe, and does not know what is so, that which is so may be God. If he is not in absolute possession of all the propositions that constitute universal truth, the one which he wants may be, that there is a God. If he cannot with certainty assign the cause of all that exists, that cause may be God. If he does not know everything that has been done

Psalm lxxix. 5, lxxxix. 46. Many commentators think the double form of the question should not be pressed.

*b* 1 Sa. xiv. 27, 29.

*c* "While Satan rages and wars about him, he meanwhile sings quietly his little psalm."—*Luther.*

*d F. I. Durand.*

**author,—prob. David**

*A Ps. of complaint over prevailing iniquity. The historical occasion of the composition is not known.*

*a* "Heb. *nabal*, imbecile, a vapid, worn-out fool, one whose heart and understanding are degraded, incapable of seeing truth. It is a word never used of mere natural obtuseness, but of spiritual corruption."—*Spk. Com.*

*b Dr. South.*

The Psalms are the heart of the Bible, its great centre of throbbing life. Deprived of them, it would indeed be a form of wondrous beauty; but would it breathe as now? A temple would remain, symmetrical and imposing; but would the many-voiced choir and supplicating priest be there?

"The footprint of the savage traced in the sand is sufficient to attest the presence of man to the atheist who will not recognise God,

whose hand is impressed upon the entire universe." — *Hugh Miller.*

*c J. Foster.*

in the immeasurable ages that are past, some things may have been done by a God. Thus, unless he knows all things—that is, precludes another Deity by being one himself—he cannot know that the Being whose existence he rejects does not exist. But he must know that He does not exist, else he deserves equal contempt and compassion for the temerity with he firmly avows his rejection, and acts accordingly."[c]

*a* Nu. xiv. 9; Pr. xxx. 14; La.ii. 16.

*b* "I judge the meaning of the prophet to be, that when all is tranquil and prosperous, on a sudden God hurls His bolts at them."—*Calvin.*

*c* Ju. v. 12.

*d Whitecross.*

4—7. (4) eat up my people, a fig. common in Heb.[a] call not, they are men who do not pray. (5) there, when God speaks to them in the terribleness of His judgments:[b] or they were in fear when they saw that God was for the righteous. (6) shamed, endeavoured to baffle. It was however in vain, because, etc. (7) oh, *etc.*, this appears like a liturgical addition of later times. The fig. however is used in early Scrip., as in Job. xlii. 10.[c]

*Trust* (*v.* 6).—An aged Christian, who had long been an invalid, and was dependent on Christian charity for her support, on sending for a new physician, who had just come into the place, and united with the same church of which she was a member, said to him, "Doctor, I wish to put myself under your care, but I cannot do it unless you will trust my Father." "Well, madam," replied the physician, "I believe your Father is rich; I may safely trust Him."[d]

## *PSALM THE FIFTEENTH.*

author,—David

*A Ps. on the conditions of access to God. Comp. prob. on occasion of removing the ark to Zion.* 2 Sa. vi. 12—19.

1—5. (1) abide, sojourn.[a] tabernacle, tent set up on Mt. Zion to receive the ark.[b] (2) walketh, *etc.*, as Ge. xvi. 1. The Heb. word *uprightly*, or *perfect*, is used to denote a consistent and thoroughly conscientious life.[c] speaketh, *etc.*, comp. Ps. xii. 2. (3) backbiteth, "allows no slander upon his tongue,[d] representing the slanderous lie as a store of venom." taketh up, receiveth, but with the idea of further circulating the slander. (4) in whose . . contemned, should be rend. "Despised is he in his own eyes, and worthless," extreme humility.[e] sweareth . . not, believes in the sanctity of an oath. (5) to usury, extravagant interest. This was forbidden by Mosaic law.[f]

*On tranquillity of mind* (*v.* 5).—We shall point out the line of conduct which, independently of any worldly position, shall tend to make us easy in mind. I. Imitate the character of the man who is described in this Psalm. II. Join to that humble trust in the favour of God. III. Attend to the culture and improvement of your minds. IV. Be careful to provide proper employment for our time. V. Learn to govern your passions. VI. Never to expect too much from the world. VII. Mix retreat with the active business of the world, and cultivate habits of serious thought and recollection (Isa. xxxii. 17).[g]

*a* Gen. xxi. 23; Ex. xii. 48; Ps. xxxvii. 3.

*b* 2 Sa. vi. 17.

*c* Job i. 1; Ps. ci. 2.

*d Kay.*

*e* Matt. v. 3; comp. Is. lviii. 3.

*f* Ex. xxii. 25; Le. xxv. 36.

*g Dr. H. Blair.*

*Backbiting* (*v.* 3).—If God love us, His mercy is as a cloak that hideth all our shame; He seeth no blemish or deformity in us. If we love our brethren our charity is as a veil before our eyes; we behold not their faults. Although they be great, we do not weigh them: although many, we reckon them not. For "charity covereth even the multitude of sins." The eye of the charitable man is always viewing his own wounds: as for the scars of other men, he seeth them not. His hand is always occupied, not in picking out motes from other men's eyes, but in drawing out

There is threefold death in the slanderer's tongue—it kills him who slanders, him who

beams from his own. St. Augustine, to show the great dislike he had of such as uncharitably delighted to unfold other men's faults, wrote these verses over his table :—

"Whoso loveth to gnaw upon men in their absence,
Let him know that this table doth not like his presence."[h]

## PSALM THE SIXTEENTH.

**1—4.** (1) preserve, keep. my trust, or "I have found refuge in Thee." (2) goodness . . thee, my happiness extends not beyond Thee.[a] (3) but, omit this word. and add *I say* after the word delight. The Psalmist is about to make a testimony of his convictions. (4) hasten after, or give gifts to ; or who woo another god.[b] of blood, of those whose hands are full of blood-shedding, and wickedness.[c] The blood-guiltiness of the offerers is referred to.

*The portrait of a God-trusting soul.*—I. His experience under the influence of the present. 1. A profound consciousness of his dependence ; 2. A delight in the fellowship of the good ; 3. An abhorrence of the practices of the wicked : 4. An exultation in the Lord as his portion ; 5. A high satisfaction with providential arrangements. II. His experiences in reference to the future. 1. Thankful : 2. Thoughtful ; 3. Calm ; 4. Happy ; 5. Hopeful.[d]

*Christian sympathy* (*v.* 2).—True love to the saints will extend to those that are most remote in respect of place, as well as to those that are near. A gracious man that has an estate, a treasury, an inheritance, is like a common fountain, that freely gives out to strangers as well as to near neighbours. A great fire will warm those that sit far from it, as well as those that sit near it ; so sincere love will extend and stretch out itself to those saints that are most remote. Gracious souls do dearly love and highly value those saints whose faces they have never seen ; and all because of the good reports that they have had of the grace of God that has been sparkling and shining in them. "My goodness extendeth not to thee. but to the saints that are in the earth."[e] — *A physician's testimony.*—Dr. Tilbury Fox, who recently died. was a physician to University College Hospital, and widely known for his medical writings. He was a Fellow of University College, and was appointed Lettsomian Lecturer to the Medical Society of London in 1869 and 1870. He was also one of the editors of our able medical magazine the *Lancet*, a late number of which contained the following interesting paragraph:—Dr. Tilbury Fox left a written request that it should be reported of him in any obituary notice that might appear in the *Lancet*, "I die a Christian in the now, I fear, much despised sense of that term, a 'simple believer in Jesus Christ as a personal. living and loving Saviour,' without any righteousness of my own, but perfect and secure in His ; and that 'I know in whom I have believed. and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed to Him until that day.' "

**5—7.** (5) the Lord, Jehovah Himself. portion, of my share in the division of the territory. To me Jehovah supplies the place of worldly blessings.[a] my cup, or part. maintainest, as well as givest. "Therefore no creature can rob me of it." (6) lines, measuring lines, marking out plots of land.[b] goodly

is slandered, and him who receives the slander.

*h Sandys.*

author,— David

*A Ps. of joy in God's presence and love. Its date is unknown.*

*Michtam*, a writing, a poem.

*a* "Whatever makes me truly happy is not above Thee, *i.e.* in addition to Thee, or without Thee. Thou alone, without exception, art my chief good."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* "The term means to give a *môhar*, the dowry paid by a husband."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* "On Egypt. monuments the priest is represented as piercing the head of a kneeling figure, whose blood spurts out as a libation."—*Spk. Com.*

*d Thomas.*

*e T. Brooks* (1662). Posidonius, in his *Life of Augustine*, relates that the good man, going to preach at a distant town, took with him a guide. This man mistook the road, and fell into a by-path. It proved that in this way the preacher's life had been saved, as his enemies had placed themselves in the proper road with a design to kill him.

*a* "Tacit allusion is made to the lot of the Levites. De. x. 9, xviii. 1.

heritage, beautiful in itself, and beautiful to me. (7) reins, here the workings of conscience. kidneys, in Heb. the seat of feelings and emotions.[c]

*Pleasant places* (*v.* 6).—Why should we adopt these words? I. Because of the country in which we were born. II. Because of the age in which we live. III. Because of the spiritual blessings which we enjoy. IV. Because of the religious privileges we possess.

*The great possession* (*vv.* 5, 6).—A gentleman one day took an acquaintance to the top of his house to show him the extent of his possessions. Waving his hand about, "There," said he, "that is my estate." Then pointing to a great distance on one side, "Do you see that farm?" "Yes." "Well, that is mine." Pointing again on the other side, "Do you see that house?" "Yes." "That also belongs to me." Then said his friend, "Do you see that little village out yonder?" "Yes." "Well, there lives a poor woman in that village who can say more than all this." "Ay! what can she say?" "Why, she can say, 'Christ is mine.'" He looked confounded, and said no more.

8—11. (8) always, taking Him as mine for ever.[a] right hand, the place of the defender and protector. (9) my glory, *i.e.* my soul. rest, *Heb.* dwell confidently, though it must die. (10) hell, the deep or excavated place; *Sheol*, the place of departed spirits. corruption, wh. may apply to man's body, but not to his glory, his soul.[b] (11) path of life, way to eternal life. thy presence, Thy countenance.[c]

*The Lord at our right hand* (*v.* 8).—Let us inquire what the effect of such an habitual recognition of God would be. I. It would make life to us a Divine thing. II. It would produce great care and watchfulness against sin. III. It would be our comfort and strength in trouble.[d]

*Joy in God's presence* (*v.* 11).—The presence of God in the most miserable places that can be were a greater happiness than the absence of God in the most glorious place that can be. David would not be afraid though he walked in the valley of the shadow of death, so that God were with him. Luther would rather be in hell, with God's presence, than in heaven, God being absent. If the presence of God takes away the dread of the shadow of the valley of death, and makes hell to be more desired than heaven, what will the presence of God make heaven to be! The three children in the fiery furnace, with God's presence, were happy. How happy, then, are the saints with God's presence in heaven![e]

*The deacon's song before his captors.*—Deacon Norris lived in Delaware during the great war between England and America. One day, hearing that the enemy had landed and were marching through the country, he saddled his horse and went forth to make observations and inquiries. He had not gone far before he fell in with a marauding party, and was captured as a supposed scout, and carried on one of the enemy's vessels, lying in the Chesapeake Bay. On being examined as to the strength and position of the American forces, he said to the officer, "You may kill me, but you cannot make me tell you anything about our army." He was retained on board until his linen became soiled, and one of the officers gave him a ruffled shirt, which he thankfully accepted and put on, carefully concealing the ruffles under his vest. He seems to have made a favourable impression

*b* "The expression suggests that the Ps. was composed when Dav. first took up his abode in Jerusalem." — *Spk. Com.*

*c* Ps. iv. 4, xvii. 3. "What can we wish for in an heritage, that is not to be found in God? Would we have large possessions? He is immensity. Would we have a sure estate? He is immutability. Would we have a term of long continuance? He is eternity itself."—*Arrowsmith.*

*a* This passage is referred to Messiah by St. Peter (Ac. ii. 25, 31).

*b* Some com. render, *the pit.*

*c* "So far as these words refer to David, they express his confidence in God's protecting care in this life, and his hope of the life to come."—*Peroune.*

*d P. W. Darnton, B.A.*

*e J. Burroughs* (1649).

"Covetousness is a vice that loves to dwell in an old and ruinous cottage, and yet in age can have no honest colour for niggardness and insatiable desire. A young man might plead the uncertainty of his estate, and doubt of his future need; but an old man has his set period before him. Since this humour is so necessarily annexed to age, I will turn it in the right

on the officers, for he was invited to a dining party on the flagship of the fleet, and accepted the invitation. At the close of the feast there were toasts and songs. At length Mr. Norris was called on for a song. He modestly declined: but there was a general demonstration of a desire that he should sing. At length he yielded. He had a fine voice, and could sing the familiar hymns of the day in most plaintive tune. He then commenced to sing the beautiful Psalm of Watts,—

"Sweet is the work, my God! my King!
To praise Thy name, give thanks and sing."

The remembrance of his home and family, and the pleasant meetings with his brethren, as contrasted with his present captive state, softened his heart, and he sang, with tearful eyes, the words—

"Fools never lift their thoughts so high:
Like brutes they live—like brutes they die;
Like grass they flourish, till Thy breath
Blasts them in everlasting death."

Before the old man had finished his psalm all merriment had ceased, and a deep solemnity pervaded the festal party. At the close of the singing the Commodore said, "Mr. Norris, you are a good man, and you shall be sent home." As soon as arrangements could be made he bade adieu to the officers, was lowered into a boat and set ashore, with a liberal supply of salt, then very scarce and valuable in the Northern Neck. He soon reached his distressed family, with a bosom swelling with gratitude and delight, and adorned, as it never was before or afterwards, with a fine ruffled shirt.

## *PSALM THE SEVENTEENTH.*

**1—5.** (1) **the right,** or righteous cause; and righteous prayer.[a] **my cry,** or joyful shout. **feigned,** guileful. (2) **let thine,** *etc.*, rend. as a declar. of God's justice, "Thine eyes do behold rightly." **are equal,** or upright, so Thou knowest the uprightness of Thy suppliant. (3) **in the night,** Ps. xvi. 7. **find nothing,**[b] of wh. to complain. **purposed,** he had made a strong resolve under much provocation. (4) **men,** or man, the great mass of men. **word . . destroyer,** he had but one guide and rule of action, God's Word. (5) **hold up,** *etc.*, rend. "Holding fast to Thy tracks in my goings, my footsteps have not been moved."[c]

*Divine sufficiency* (*v.* 5).—In these words there are three things brought before us. I. A recognition of God. II. An acknowledgment to God. III. A request from God.[a]—*Divine support.*—Let me observe David, and learn to pray as he prayed. I. See his course. He speaks of his goings. Religion does not allow a man to sit still. He speaks of his goings in God's paths. These are threefold. 1. The path of His commands; 2. His ordinances; 3. Of His dispensations. II. His concern respecting this course. It is the language of—1. Conviction; 2. Of apprehension; 3. Of weakness; 4. Of confidence.[c]

*An artless argument* (*v.* 4).—Naimbanna, a black prince, arrived in England, from the neighbourhood of Sierra Leone, in 1791. The gentleman to whose care he was entrusted, took great pains to



way and nourish it in myself. The older I grow the more covetous will I be,—but of the riches not of the world I am leaving, but of the world I am entering upon. It is good to covet what I may have and cannot leave behind me."—*Bp. Hall.*

*v.* 8. *Bp. Beveridge*, v. 296; *Bp. Talbot*, 239; *Bp. Moore*, ii. 239; *E. Broadhurst*, 129; *T. Newman*, ii. 209; *E. Smith*, i. 172; *Dr. T. Amory*, 408; *P. Houghton*, 1; *J. Saurin*, vii. 502; *J. R. Boultbee*, i. 169; *T. Gisborne*, i. 256; *R. Nares*, 170; *J. G. Dowling*, 1.

*vv.* 8—11. *Dr. L. Twells, Boyle Lec.* i. 145.

**author,—David**

*A Ps. of supplication for protection from the evil world and evil men. Assigned to the time of persecution.* See 1 Sa. xxiii. 26.

*a* "As God knoweth Dav. to have performed his duty rightfully and blamelessly, and therefore to be wrongfully vexed by his enemies, He would look upon him especially, bec. relying on His help he hopes well, and also, in the meanwhile, he prays heartily to Him."—*Calvin.*

*b* For the fig. comp. Job xxiii. 10; Ps. xii. 6, xxvi. 2; Zec. xiii. 9; 1 Pe. i. 7.

convince him that the Bible was the Word of God, and he received it as such, with great reverence and simplicity. Do we ask what it was that satisfied him on this subject? let us listen to his artless words. "When I found," says he, "all good men minding the Bible, and calling it the Word of God, and all bad men disregarding it, I then was sure that the Bible must be what good men call it, the Word of God."

6—9. (6) I have called, *I* is emphatic.[a] The Psalmist makes a personal testimony. (7) show, *etc.*, lit. *make wonderful*; display in a marked manner. by thy right hand, or against Thy right hand.[b] (8) apple, *Heb.* pupil; the "daughter of the eye."[c] shadow, Ru. iii. 12; Matt. xxiii. 37. (9) oppress me, or waste me. deadly, the Heb. expresses the eagerness with wh. the enemies pursue their malicious intent.[d] Marg. against my soul or life.

*Divine couplets* (*v.* 6).—We have here—I. Two words, both great, though little, "call" and "hear." II. Two persons, one great and the other little, "I," "Thee, O God." III. Two tenses: past, "I have;" future, "Thou wilt." IV. Two wonders, that we do not call more, and that God hears such unworthy prayers.[e]

*Bible poetry.*—The most obvious feature of Bible poetry is its intense theism. The question of the existence of God is never raised, and an atheist—if there be one—is simply set down as a fool. The Hebrew poet lives and moves in the idea of a living God, as a self-revealing, personal, almighty, holy, omniscient, all-pervading, and merciful Being, and overflows with His adoration and praise. He sees and hears God in the works of creation, and in the events of history. Jehovah is to him the Maker and Preserver of all things. He shines in the firmament, He rides on the thunderstorm, He clothes the lilies, He feeds the ravens and young lions, and the cattle on a thousand hills; He gives rain and fruitful seasons: He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, of Moses, David and the prophets. He dwells with Israel, He is their ever-present help and shield, their comfort and joy. He is just and holy in His judgments, good, merciful, and true in all His dealings. He overrules even the wrath of man for His own glory and the good of His people.[f]

10—12. (10) fat, lit. *their fat have they shut up:* or have enclosed their heart.[a] (11) compassed, illus. by 1 Sa xxiii. 26. in our steps, *lit.* in each step we take. bowing down, or to bring us down to the earth.[b] (12) like as, or his likeness is. Singling out the most prominent of his enemies. May refer to Saul. lurking, lying in wait.[c]

*Learning by heart.*—It was by the heart that Moses, and Isaiah, and Paul, and John, that Luther, and Knox, and Wilberforce, and Howard knew the truths which shook the world. It is only by the heart that we know the Bible. A man sits down before such a passage as, "That I may know Him [Christ] and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being made conformable unto death." He exhausts all the aid that grammar and lexicon can give: yet he has not touched the core of the verse: nor will he until he has passed through the same experience as Paul, and has learned the words by heart. He only is a true commentator who has learned the Word by heart. A young man once asked Dr. Wayland his opinion of Calvin's Commen-

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*c* "I owe my safety to the care which I take to tread in Thy footsteps."—*Wordsworth.*
*d* *J. M. Stoot, M.A.*
*e* *W. Jay.*

*a* "The spirit of the closing portion of the Ps. shows that there was no unworthy boasting in the former portion."—*Perowne.*

*b* "Thou deliverer of those seeking protection from adversaries with Thy right hand."—*Hitzig.*
"Thou Helper of those seeking protection from adversaries, at Thy right hand."—*Aben Ezra; Delitzsch.*

*c* De. xxxii. 10, 11.
"The ancient Egyptians had the term 'child of the eye' for darling."—*Spk. Com.*

*d* Ps. lxxiv. 19.

*e* *C. H. Spurgeon.*

*f* *Prof. Schaff.*

*a* "These men led a luxurious and selfish life, in consequence of which they had become proud and unfeeling."—*Perowne.*
Ps. lxxiii. 7; Is. vi. 10.

*b* "The fig. refers to the lion, wh. fixes his eye on the prey, so that it falls paralysed by terror."—*Spk. Com.*
Ps. x. 9.

*c* Fr. Ger. *lauern*, to lie hid.

taries, especially on the Psalms. He responded in his quaint, homely way, "Calvin was well qualified to write on the Psalms. He had disease, toil, anxiety, persecution, loneliness, and peril. All these things would rub the Psalms into a man."—*Schoolmaster preparing to pray.*—A minister relates a very extraordinary fact, which he had from a gentleman of respectability. In one of the Southern cities of America, an instructor was wanted to take charge of a school. A gentleman, well qualified by talents, made application for the situation, and was appointed. On becoming acquainted with the duties which he must perform, he found, to his surprise, that one of the requisitions which were made on the instructor was, that he must daily open the school by prayer. As he was an infidel in his opinions, this was to him an appalling condition. How could he, with his peculiar views, attempt to pray to a God, in whose existence and attributes he did not believe? Here was a mortal struggle. As, however, he greatly coveted the situation, to which at his own request he had been appointed, he came to the conclusion he would endeavour to surmount the difficulty by learning in some way a form of prayer. The time drawing near when he must open the school, he retired to a forest of woods in the vicinity, where he might be perfectly free in expressing himself audibly and without interruption, resolving to do so as if it were the first day of opening the school. He commenced, but before leaving the woods, light darted on his mind, and conviction arrested his conscience. He became deeply sensible of the being and perfections of Almighty God, against whom he had transgressed in denying His existence; and when the season arrived for commencing his duties as a teacher, he had become a true Christian, and he prayed with the unction and penitence of the publican. He became the instrument of the conversion of a number of his pupils, and was afterwards an acceptable and highly popular preacher of the Gospel.

13—15. (13) **disappoint,** lit. *come before his face.* This the proper meaning of the term *prevent.*[a] **thy sword,** or *by thy sword,* lit. "Do Thou, Thy sword, deliver my soul," etc. (14) **thy hand,** or by thy hand, God's instrument for deliverance. **of the world,** Lu. xvi. 8. **hid treasure,** or stores of food. **leave the rest,** so a retributive Providence does not overtake them in this life.[b] (15) **behold thy face,** expression for hold close communion.[c] **in righteousness,** bec. to the righteous only is such communion granted. **awake,** full reference must be to awaking from sleep of death.[d] **likeness,** 1 John iii. 2.

*The awakener* (*v.* 15).—I. The awakening that He teaches us to anticipate. 1. It may apply to the waking of the soul out of this life: our natural powers will then awake, our spiritual life will then awake, we shall awake from all that is dreamy and unsubstantial; 2. It will also apply to the waking of the body out of the grave in the hour of the resurrection. II. The great sight which on awakening we shall certainly behold. 1. We shall behold the face of the Lord; 2. We shall behold this vision in a state of righteousness; 3. We shall behold this vision of the Lord in His likeness; 4. We shall behold this vision and be satisfied.[e]

*The family likeness* (*v.* 15).—Did you ever observe how remarkably old age brings out family likenesses, which, having been kept, as it were, in abeyance, while the passions and business of

"Virtue is an angel; but she is a blind one, and must ask of knowledge to show her the pathway that leads to her, goal. Mere knowledge, on the other hand, like a Swiss mercenary, is ready to combat either in the ranks of sin or under the banner of righteousness; ready to forge cannonballs, or to print New Testaments; to navigate a corsair's vessel or a missionary ship."—*Horace Mann.*

"Hell-fire burns with rage, and meets with fuel fully prepared for it, when God dooms unto it a head full of light and a heart full of lusts. Those who know God's will, but do it not, do but carry a torch with them to hell, to pile that fire which must for ever burn them."—*Bp. Hopkins.*

*a* "The foe springs like a lion upon Dav., may Jahve, as Dav.'s defence, cross the path of the lion, and intercept him."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* Job xxi. 17.

*c* Comp. Moses, Nu. xii. 8.

*d* "Awake in the morning, a suitable expression in a night psalm."—*Ewald.*

"Waking from the present night of sorrow and suffering."—*Calvin.*

*e C. Stanford.*

"This text declares what is elsewhere clearly

intimated, a firm belief in a futurity of blessedness reserved for the true children of God."—*Spk. Com.*

*f Southey.*

the world engrossed the parties, come forth again in age (as in infancy), the features settling into their primary characters before dissolution? I have seen some affecting instances of this; a brother and sister, than whom no two persons in middle life could have been more unlike in countenance or in character, becoming like as twins at last. I now see my father's lineaments in the looking-glass where they never used to appear.*f*

## *PSALM THE EIGHTEENTH.*

**Author,—David.**

*A Psalm sketching a life story, written at the close of David's chequered life.* See 2 Sa. xxii.

"Obs. the climax: the rock or cliff comes first as the place of refuge, then the fortress or fastness as a place carefully fortified, then the personal deliverer, without whose intervention escape would have been impossible."—*Spk. Com.*

De. xxxiii. 17; Lu. i. 69.

*a Kay.*

*b Dr. Thomas.*

**1, 2.** (1) **love,** the Heb. form employed indic. affection in its most tender aspects. "It is elsewhere used of God's love to man, not of man's love to God." (2) **rock,** *etc.*, these figs. are naturally suggested by the experiences of Dav.'s time of persecution. **my strength,** *Heb.* my rock: poetical repetition of his leading fig. for God. **buckler,** the lighter form of shield. **horn,** *etc.*, symbol of strength: or of height and dignity.[a] **high tower,** in wh. I am beyond reach of danger.

*Review of a troubled life.*—In this Psalm we have three things. I. A life greatly troubled. They were—1. Worthless; 2. Numerous; 3. Violent; 4. Indefatigable. II. A God equal to all emergencies. God appeared to him as—1. His all-sufficient protector; 2. His triumphant deliverer: this movement of God is in answer to prayer, sublimely grand, completely effective. III. A soul alive with true sentiments. What are they? 1. Love; 2. Trust; 3. Praise.[b]

*The will to work* (*v.* 1).—Karamsin, the Russian traveller, having witnessed the Rev. J. C. Lavater's diligence in study, visiting the sick, and relieving the poor, was greatly surprised at his fortitude and activity, and said to him, "Whence have you so much strength of mind and power of endurance?" "My friend," replied he, "man rarely wants the power to work when he possesses the will: the more I labour in the discharge of my duties, so much the more ability and inclination to labour do I constantly find within myself."

**3—6.** (3) **will call,** more precisely, *I am continually calling.* **praised,** on account of former mercies, wh. renew the Psalmist's confidence. **so,** by thus securing the help of God. (4) **sorrows . . me,** *lit.* cords. Death is figured as a hunter, who surrounds the field with a net.[a] **floods,** or multitudes, lit. *streams of ungodliness.* **ungodly,** lit. *Belial:* "the personification of destructive wickedness."[b] (5) **sorrows,** cords or bands. **hell,** *Sheol,* the grave. **prevented,** encountered, endangered me. (6) **distress, strait:** when seemingly closed in. **temple,**[c] God's heavenly dwelling-place, wh. is both palace and temple.

*Object, nature, and effect of prayer* (*v.* 3).—The text presents two things. I. David's purpose. He says God is worthy to be praised. We praise men for—1. The beauty of their persons: 2. The largeness of their minds; 3. The benevolence of their hearts; 4. The liberality of their actions. This purpose was—(1) Pious; (2) Rational; (3) Scriptural: (4) Necessary; (5) Beneficial. II. David's confidence. This supposes—1. That he had enemies; 2. That he was in danger from them; 3. That he had no expectation of saving himself; 4. That none can perish who thus pray Learn:—(1) God is worthy to be praised; (2) David was a man

*a Spk. Com.* "The Psalmist's dangers are here represented by 2 figures: a snare (Ps. xci. 3), and a whelming stream (Jonah ii. 5)."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* De. xiii. 13; Ju. xix. 22; 1 Sa. ii. 12. xxv. 17.

*c* This pass. is conclusive as to the use of the word previous to the erection of Solomon's temple, a point of great importance in its bearing upon other Psalms. (Ps. v. 7. xi. 4.)—*Spk. Com.*

of prayer; (3) David's triumphs over his enemies were those of prayer.[d]

*The thundering legion* (*v.* 6).—It was in the year 176 of the Christian era that the Romans, in an expedition against the Gauls, under the command of the Emperor Aurelius, found themselves encircled on all sides by precipitous mountains, which were occupied by their barbarian enemies. A defeat seemed inevitable, and the Roman soldiers were in want of food and tormented with thirst. In this extremity the commander of the Prætorian guards informs the emperor that the Militine legion are Christians, and that they believe in the efficacy of prayer. "Let them pray, then," replies Aurelius. Full of faith, the legion prostrate themselves on the ground, and conjure the Christian's God to succour the Roman troops. They had scarcely risen from their knees when thick clouds darken the air, thunder peals among the deep fastnesses of the mountains, a tremendous shower of hail accompanied by lightning drives the barbarians from their entrenchments, while a soft and gracious rain falls over the Roman camp, and refreshes the worn-out soldiers. "So that," says the pagan historian, "at the same time, and in the same place, fire and water descended from the clouds, one burning the enemy as with oil, the other invigorating the Romans. In their despair the Quadi rushed down from their camp, and casting themselves frantically into the midst of the Romans, where the gentle rain descended, sought relief from their tortures; even the emperor pitied them. In memory of this miracle, continues Dion Cassius, the army proclaimed Marcus Aurelius emperor for the seventh time; and he decreed that ever after these Christian troops should be called "The Thundering Legion." When writing afterwards to the senate to inform them of this miraculous success, Marcus Aurelius commanded that all persecutions against the Christians should henceforth cease.[e]

7—11. (7) then, *etc.*, Dav. poetically describes his deliverance as if it had been a personal manifestation of Jehovah through the sublime agencies of nature.[a] shook, there was an earthquake. (8) smoke, *etc.*,[b] poetic reference to the clouds hanging about the mountains. fire, or lightning. (9) bowed, bringing the heavy storm-clouds to bend low. darkness, of the storm-cloud. God being above it to direct it. (10) cherub, or *cherubim*, conceived of as the special escort of Jehovah.[c] They symbolise the agencies of nature. (11) pavilion, or tent; this was pitched amidst the clouds, which were His armies.

*Earthquakes, their moral suggestions* (*v.* 7).—I. The perilous condition of our earthly existence. This shows—1. The absurdity of setting our affections on material good; 2. The folly of postponing the preparation for eternity. II. The probability of a coming crisis in the history of our planet. III. The element of the severe in the Divine government. 1. The sinner deserves the severe; 2. And requires it. IV. The wisdom of seeking the Divine protection. 1. It can be obtained; 2. Has been; 3. Secures from all danger.[d]

*Lyric poetry.*—Lyric poetry is so called because it is fitted to be sung to a musical instrument, such as the lyre. This is the earliest form of poetry, being, as Ewald describes it, "The daughter of the moment; of swift-rising, powerful feelings, of deep stirrings and fiery emotions of the soul." It is the principal kind of poeti-

*d Beta* in 400 Sks.
The Psalms are the book of common prayer for believers in all ages—the inspired handbook of devotions—a manual of holy musings and aspirations. Elsewhere in the Bible God speaks to us; here He helps us to speak to Him.

*e Mrs. Elliot.*
"In the performance of its sacred offices, it fears no danger, spares no expense, looks in the volcano, dives into the ocean, perforates the earth, wings its flight into the skies, enriches the globe, explores sea and land, contemplates the distant, examines the minute, comprehends the great, ascends to the sublime; no place too remote for its grasp, no heavens too exalted for its reach."—*De Witt Clinton.*

*a* Compare Ps. lxviii. 7, 8, lxxvii. 14–20; Ex. xix. Ju. v. 4; Am. ix. 5; Mi. i. 3; Ha. iii.
The historical references are partly to the deliverance at the Red Sea, and partly to the giving of the law at Sinai.

*b* For *out of his nostrils*, some read *in his anger.* De. xxix. 20.

*c* "The fig. in this v. recalls Ezekiel's description of the cherub as mounted on wheels, and thus rendered a kind of living

throne - chariot. Ezek. i., x." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*d Dr. Thomas.*

*e R. Tuck, B.A.*

cal composition found in the Scriptures, and may be illustrated by the songs of Moses (Ex. xv.), of Deborah (Judges v.), and of David (Ps. xviii.). It is a thoroughly national kind of poetry, suited to express the various emotions of the people under circumstances of success or failure, depression or exultation. The headings of some of the psalms indicate what kind of musical instrument would best accompany the particular song.[e]

12—15. (12) **brightness,** reflection of His glory, wh. breaks up the clouds in lightning, hail, etc. **hail,** the attendant of the severer storms.[a] (13) **thundered,** immediately upon the lightning. **Highest,**[b] most High, in 2 Sa. xxii. 14. (14) **arrows,** poetical for *His lightnings.* **discomfited,** same word is used in Ex. xiv. 24. (15) **channels . . seen,** fig. taken from the dry path made thro' the Red Sea. **foundations,** or bottom of the sea. **blast,** *etc.*, the wind that is represented as driving back the Red Sea.[c]

*The poetry of Ps.* xviii.—Take the 18th Psalm, and observe what a fulness of poetic feeling and imagery is in it. "Take the first two verses. Here is the wilderness with its cliffs and caves, and Saul hunting the fugitive to death; there is Keilah and its strong walls; the warrior band with their shields and spears, who had so often shared their leader's dangers and triumphs; the high towers which he had scaled, or which his victorious hands had built; and through all, the sense of complete trust in One who had in past troubles provided these places of refuge, and in whose love was ample room for confidence under every trial to which soul or body could be exposed."

16—19. (16) **from above,** in a very direct way Div. deliverance came. **many waters,** fig. for *calamities.*[a] (17) **for they,** or *when* they. (18) **prevented me,** *v.* 5. (19) **large place,** comp. *distress*, or strait, of *v.*6. Open ground, free of the hunter's nets. **delighted in me,** comp. 2 Sa. xv. 26; Ps. xxii. 8.

*Deliverance from deep waters* (*v.* 16).—We take these words as the expression of—I. David's experience. II. Of Christ's experience. III. Of every Christian's experience.[b]

*Ingratitude to God.*—The English proverb says: "The river past, and God forgotten," to express with how mournful a frequency He whose assistance was invoked—it may have been earnestly in the moment of peril—is remembered no more so soon as by His help the danger has been surmounted. And the Italian form of it sounds a still sadder depth of ingratitude: "The peril passed, the saint mocked," the vows made to Him in peril remaining unperformed in safety, and He treated somewhat as in Greek story Juno was treated by Mandrabulus the Samian, who, having under her auspices and through her direction discovered a gold mine, in his instant gratitude vowed to her a golden ram, which he presently exchanged in intention for a silver one, and again this for a very small brass one, and this for nothing at all.[c]

20—24. (20) **righteousness,** not absolute freedom fr. sin, but conscious integrity: sincerity of heart.[a] **cleanness . . hands,** from the particular sins with wh. he was charged. Saul assumed that he was plotting against his life. (21) **wickedly,** knowingly and wilfully. Sins of weakness and error he would admit, not deliberate sins of intention. (22) **judgments,** or disclosures of his will. (23) **upright,** Ge. xvii. 1. **before him,**

*a* Job xxx. 14; Ps. cxxiv. 4, 5.

*b Dr. Bonar.*

There are various seasons when it is particularly desirable that treasures of this kind should be in readiness. What can be more fitting, for instance, at family prayers, than to have one or more of the Psalms repeated in addition to the passage read, or, occasionally, in place of the regular reading as a home Sabbath exercise?

*c Abp. Trench.*

*a* Comp. St. Paul, Ac. xxiii. 1. "Some have seen in this language a too boastful spirit; but the words are, in truth, words of childlike, open-

*a* "Hail is rare in Palestine, but often the more terrible and destructive when it does fall. Comp. Job xxxviii. 22; Jos. x. 11." — *Ewald.*

Ex. ix. 23, 24.

*b* "Name of God as the inapproachable . . ulge, who governs all things." — *Delitzsch.*

*c* Ex. xiv. 21.

or in my relations with him. (24) **in his eyesight**, under His searching inspections.[b]

*Thanksgiving in review of a troublous life* (*v.* 20).—In these verses David regards God's interpositions on his behalf as—I. A vindication of his own character. 1. He regarded his character as very excellent: 2. As Divinely influential. II. As an illustration of God's manifestation. The general principle here is this, that as man is, so is God to him. This is true in two respects. 1. As a personal power: 2. As a mental conception.[c]

*Keeping from sin* (*v.* 23).—Let him that would not enter into temptation, labour to know his own heart, to be acquainted with his own spirit, his natural frame and temper, his lusts and corruptions, his natural sinful or spiritual weakness, that, finding where his weakness lies, he may be careful to keep at a distance from all occasions of sin. Our Saviour tells the disciples, "that they knew not what spirit they were of," which under a pretence of zeal betrayed them into ambition and desire of revenge. Had they known it, they would have watched over themselves. David tells us (Ps. xviii. 23) that he considered his ways, and "kept himself from his iniquity," which he was particularly prone unto. . . . Take heed lest you have a Jehu in you, that shall make you drive furiously; or a Jonah in you, that will make you ready to repine; or a David, that will make you hasty in your determinations, as he was often in the warmth and goodness of his natural temper. He who watches not this thoroughly, who is not exactly skilled in the knowledge of himself, will never be disentangled from one temptation or another all his days.[d]

25—29. (25) **merciful**, not merely kind, but *gracious*, "a friend of God and man."[a] (26) **froward**,[b] not willing to comply with what is reasonable. **show . . froward**, a diff. Heb. word is here used. Trans. *wilt wrestle*, or show thyself tortuous.[c] (27) **afflicted people**, who are thought of as humble. (28) **light my candle**,[d] Job xviii. 6, xxix. 3. (29) **I have**, better *I could*. **wall**, with poss. reference to the taking of Zion.[e]

*Thanksgiving in view of a troublous life* (*v.* 28).—These verses may be regarded as including—I. What is gloriously true. 1. As relating to God: perfect in His procedure, faithful in His word, the Guardian of His people, absolute in existence; 2. Those relating to man: his strength, swiftness, skill, greatness, success from God. II. What is morally questionable. What are these? 1. Revenge; 2. Ambition; 3. Pious perversity.[f]

30—34. (30) **tried**, tested, or refined. "In God's promise there is no mixture of alloy." **buckler**, 2 Sa. xxii. 31. (31) **save the Lord**, *i.e.* Jehovah. (32) **girdeth**, prepareth me for work and war.[a] **my way perfect**,[b] even as His, *v.* 30. (33) **hind's feet**, running swiftly, and standing firmly in dangerous places.[c] **high places**, mountain strongholds. (34) **bow . . arms**, rend. "And my arms can bend a copper bow."[d]

*The perfection of God's ways* (*v.* 30).—Doctrine—the dispensations of Providence are altogether perfect and faultless, however they appear to our carnal hearts. I. Take notice of some seeming faults our corruptions would spy out in the dispensations of Providence. 1. The reasons of dispensations not seen (Ps. lxxvii. 19; Acts x. 17; John xiii. 6, 7); 2. Providence seeming to forget the promises (Jer. xv. 18), Providence going cross to the promises

hearted simplicity, not of arrogant boastfulness."—*Peroone.*

*b* 1 Sa. xxvi. 23, 24; 1 Ki. xiv. 8, xv. 5.

*c Dr. Thomas.* "God respecteth not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how neat they are; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they are; nor the musie of our prayers, how melodious they are; nor the logic of our prayers, how methodical they are—but the divinity of our prayers, how heart-sprung they are. Not gifts, but graces, prevail in prayer."—*Trapp.*

*d Dr. Owen.*

*a* "God renders to men according to their deeds in a penal, not in a vindictive sense."—*Fausset.*

*b* A.-S., *framward*, perverse.

*c* "The Lord so deals with the perverse as to bring them into inextricable perplexity, and to overthrow them"—*Spk. Com.*

*d* "The lamp lighted in the house is the image at once of prosperity and continuance of life and happiness."—*Peroone.*

*e* 2 Sa. v. 6–9.

*f Dr. Thomas.*

*a* Girding was essential to free motion on account of the looseness of Oriental dresses; hence it is an expressive fig. for describing the gift of strength."—*Fausset.*

*b* Mat. v. 48.
*c* Ha. iii. 19.
*d* "The expression is obviously hyperbolical, and no inference can be drawn as to the use of copper in the structure of bow-frames." — *Jennings and Lowe.*
*e T. Boston.*

(Gen. xxii.; Isaiah xxxviii. 1); 3. Providence running, as it seems, quite contrary to the design of it (Joseph); 4. Providence laying aside the most likely means; 5. Providence falling on means quite contrary to the design of it, healing by wounding, comfort by tears: 6. Wicked men getting the sunny side of the brae (Ps. lxxiii. 12, 14); 7. Astonishing strokes lighting on those most dear to God; 8. Great afflictions meeting the Lord's people in the way of duty. II. In what respects the way of God is perfect. 1. All dispensations are exactly according to the pattern shown in the Word; 2. They are exactly suited to God's design and His people's necessities; 3. They are perfect in respect to their time; 4. As to their stability. III. Confirm the point. IV. Improvement.[e]

35—39. (35) **thy salvation**, this Dav. felt was his real shield. **thy gentleness**, or condescension, *lit.* humility,[a] the correlative quality in man. (36) **enlarged**, given me room for wide steps. **feet**, *lit.* ancles, "ref. is to giving way owing to physical weakness." (37) **turn again**, checked in the pursuit. (38) **fallen**, and over them he ran, pursuing others. (39) **subdued**, bowed down.

*The gentleness of God* (*v.* 35).—I. What do we mean by gentleness? God's gentleness lies in His consenting to the use of indirection, as a way of gaining his adversaries. II. The end God has in view in condescending to these gracious methods, viz., to make us great.[b]

40—42. (40) **necks**,[a] *see* Ex. xxiii. 27. "Nothing is seen of my enemies but their backs." (41) **answered not**, bec. they fought against His anointed. And their cry was only one of terror. (42) **beat them small**, defeat them in a most complete and humbling way.

*Plan of the wicked defeated.*—A monk who had introduced himself to the bedside of a dying nobleman, who was at that time in a state of insensibility, continued crying out, "My lord, will you make a grant of such and such a thing to our monastery?" The sick man, unable to speak, nodded his head. The monk turned round to the son who was standing in the room, and said, "You see, sir, that my lord, your father, gives his consent to my request." The son immediately exclaimed, "Father, is it your will that I kick this monk downstairs?" The usual nod was given. The young man instantly rewarded the assiduities of the monk by sending him with great precipitation out of the house.[b]

43—45. (43) **strivings**, this express. apparently refers to internal difficulties. **head of the heathen**, head of nations. (44) **submit**,[a] by a forced subjection, proceeding from fear, not from free will. (45) **fade away**, or be wearied out. **close places**, caves or strongholds, in wh. a few may have found temporary shelter.

*The story of a heathen.*—The *Burman Missionary* tells this story of an old and blind man, who thirty years ago came into possession, through a countryman stopping over night at his house, of a book printed in Burmese, and containing only the Psalms and a part of the Prophets. Before he had finished the Psalms he cast away his idols and Buddhism, and believed in a living God—Creator, Preserver, and Judge of men, and from that time he has worshipped and prayed to the eternal God. He committed many

*a* "A very remarkable word as applied to God, and just one of those links connecting the Divine with the human, wh., in the O. Test. so strikingly foreshadow an incarnation." — *Perowne.*
*b H. Bushnell.*

*a* Lit. *backs of the necks.*
"David yields me every day the most delightful hour. There is nothing Greek, nothing Roman, nothing in the west, nor in the land towards midnight, to equal David, whom the God of Israel chose to praise Him higher than the gods of the nations."—*Müller.*
*b Whitecross.*

*a* Some trans. *flatter me; lie to me.*
There are in the whole Book of Psalms 2,345 verses, making an average of fifteen and a fraction to each psalm. Any one treasuring up that amount weekly—15 or 16 verses—would in the course of three years master the whole; or, at the rate of

of the Psalm-prayers to memory, and daily offered them, especially the fifty-first. For twenty years he lived in this way before ever hearing of Christ and the Atonement. Coming then from the interior to Prome, he heard of a foreign preacher residing there, and from him received a copy of the New Testament. He says that if a man should go about and attend to his business twenty years by starlight, and the sun should then rise upon him in all its glory, he thinks it would produce about such a change in his eyes and vision as the Gospel of Matthew produced on his mind; that then the long night of praying to God and hoping for mercy without a mediator or an atonement came to an end, and for the past ten years his hope has been firmly fixed on Christ, and there it rests.

**46—50.** (46) **the Lord liveth,** comp. Ps. xlii. 2. **my rock,** *v.* 2. (47) **avengeth,** awardeth retributions to me.[a] (48) **yea, thou,** he turns fr. testifying of God to men, and makes his appeal and prayer directly to God. **violent man,** prob. Saul. (49) **give thanks,**[b] or make solemn acknowledgment and confession to Thee. (50) **and to his seed,** 2 Sa. vii. 12—16, 26—29.

*God as a rock* (*v.* 46).—Is the "shadow of a great rock" desirable "in a weary land," to bear the scorchings of the sun, and to revive the fainting traveller? What a covert and hiding-place then is God, against all storms raised either by the rage of man, or by the estuations of conscience? Is a rock of an awful aspect for its height? How great, then, is God, whose glory is above the heavens, whose faithfulness reaches unto the clouds. What evil can befall me, under which His everlasting arms cannot support me? A believer can only be wounded by his own fears, as the diamond is only cut by its own dust. O Saviour, if Peter cried out, "Save, Master, I perish," how much more shall I, who fall far short of his "little faith."[c]

## *PSALM THE NINETEENTH.*

author,—David

*Psalm praising the God of nature and of revelation. Date, his early manhood.*

**1—3.** (1) **heavens,** the natural heavens: the firmament, and its contents. **declare,** or recount: it is as if they sung an unceasing song.[a] **God,** *El,* the God of creation. (2) **uttereth,** *welleth out,* as from a fountain. "Each day overflows with utterances full of meaning, wh. it transmits to its successor."[b] **knowledge,** or inward apprehension. (3) **no speech,** their message is not fashioned into words.[c]

*The two volumes* (*vv.* 1—7).—The text puts the book of Scripture in contrast with the book of nature. I. Some things the heavens teach us. 1. They say, God is great; 2. Wise; 3. Good. For great lessons to make us happy we must go to the Bible. For— II. There are some things the heavens cannot teach us. They cannot—1. Show us the way to happiness; 2. Or tell us the way to holiness; 3. Or the way to glory. Since of these two books the Bible is the best—(1) Study it most; (2) Study both the works and the word of God; (3) Study the works of God in the light of His word.[d]—*Nature preaching.*—The revelations of nature. I. The fact of nature reveals the being of God. II. The vastness of nature shows His immensity. III. The uniformity of nature declares His unity. IV. The regularity of nature discloses His unchangeableness. V. The variety of nature manifests His ex-

one verse daily, would in the course of six years and something over accomplish the same.

*v.* 43. *Dr. A. McCaul, Warburton Lect.* 85.

*a* "An important pass. as bearing upon Dav.'s character, and his repudiation of private acts of vengeance."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Ro. xv. 9.

"In the morning David's Psalms are sought for. In the night, when men are asleep, David wakes them up to sing; and gathering the servants of God into angelic bands, turns earth into heaven, and makes angels of men, chanting David's psalms."—*Chrysostom.*

*c W. Spurstowe* (1659).

*a* Job xxxviii. 7; Ro. i. 20.

*b Spk. Com.*

"Day and night are represented as the underheralds of God's glory, communicating to their successors what they had learned from the heavens and from the firmament."—*Hengstenberg.*

*c* "We prefer to render, 'It is not a declaration, neither are they words whose

voice is inaudible (or incomprehensible)."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*d Dr. J. Edmond.*

*e W. Whythe.*

*f Stems and Twigs.*

*v.* 1. *J. S. Monsell*, iii. 207; *J. Calthrop*, i. 150.

*vv.* 1, 2. *J. Adams*, 1; *J. Clapp*, ii. 213.

*vv.* 1—6. *T. Chevallier, Huls. Lect.*

*vv.* 3, 4. *Dr. J. Barrow*, iv. 444.

*a* Ha. iii. 11.

*b* "Properly the canopy wh. is supported by four poles, and borne by four boys, at the consecration of the bridal pair, and then also the marriage itself."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* "A very common epithet of the sun in Persian is *garonraw*, or the *hot*, or *swift-goer*."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"It is doubtful whether the heavens themselves are the royal pavilion; or whether the sun is supposed to issue fr. a tent when he rises, and return to it when he sits."—*Perowne.*

During the time that Dr. Kennicott was employed in preparing his Polyglot Bible, he was accustomed to hear his wife read to him in their daily airings those different portions to which his immediate attention was called. When preparing for their ride the day after this great work haustlessness. VI. The adaptations of nature unveil His wisdom. VII. The happiness of nature displays His goodness.*c*—*The preaching of the heavens.*—Man has said, the heavens declare the birth or death of the great, the conflict of nations, impending judgments. I. What the heavens declare. 1. The opulence; 2. The wisdom; 3. The power; 4. The providence of God: and 5. His majesty. II. How they declare it. 1. Silently: 2. Continually; 3. Variously; 4. Effectively. Learn:—thus we have shown us—(1) The preacher's best themes: (2) The best mode of delivery.*f*

*The voice of the heavens* (*v.* 3).—It is probable that this verse should be read thus (for the italicised words are our translators'), "There is no speech nor language, their voice is not heard;" they bear witness silently to the majesty and power of God. Nor does this at all contradict the statement in the second verse, that every day utters—literally, "pours forth"—speech, as the night also shows knowledge; the testimony is wordless, yet it is stronger than speech, for it goes directly to the heart of man.

4—6. (4) line, Heb. means boundary line, marking extent of dominion: then, a rule of conduct. Fig. a sound, a strain, Ro. x. 18. in them, *i.e.* the heavens. tabernacle, or pavilion[a] for a king. (5) bridegroom, symbol of youthful vigour and happiness. chamber, Heb. *chuppah*,[b] Joel ii. 16. strong man, comp. Lu. v. 31. race, or course fr. east to west.[c] (6) end, the extreme E. of the horizon. hid . . heat, this even the blind may feel.

*The sun's tabernacle* (*v.* 4).—We are told that the heavens, or the heavenly bodies, form a tabernacle or "pavilion" for the sun. This is a striking figure, and recent discoveries prove that this "pavilion" has a greater influence upon the orb which is the centre of our system than was formerly supposed. The sun was known to be the source of light, heat, and motion to the planets; we find now that the sun is not insensible, vast as it is, to changes in these bodies. Messrs. Lockyer and Stewart tell us "that there is great delicacy of constitution in the sun, and that the bond between it and the other members of the system appears to be more intimate than was hitherto imagined. The result will be that a disturbance from without is very easily communicated to our luminary, and when it takes place, it communicates a thrill to the very extremity of the system.—*The old, old story.*—"I am tired of newspapers, and travels, and novels," said a young girl to her teacher. "Tell me of some good book to read." "The Bible is a good book." "Oh, that is so old. I do not care to read always the same story. I want something new." "If you but read aright, the Scriptures are a mine of wealth, ever displaying new treasures." "How can that be?" "An anecdote of one of Whitefield's hearers will illustrate my meaning. One day, while Whitefield was preaching on the heath, an old man and his wife passed along the road on horseback. Attracted by the crowd and the minister's voice, they stopped to hear 'what the man was talking about.' He talked of eighteen hundred years ago, and the old man said, impatiently, 'Mary, come along. It is only something that happened a long while ago.' But Mary wished to stay a little longer. Soon both were in tears, and asking, 'What shall I do to be saved?' On their way home the old man thought of his Bible, and exclaimed, 'Mary, doesn't our old Book at home say something about these things?' They

went home rejoicing, and there read the long-neglected Book—read it with ever-increasing delight. 'Why, Mary,' said the surprised and happy husband, 'is this indeed our old Book? Everything seems quite new.' Thus will it be with you. Thus may it be with all. If the Spirit but interpret the Word, and the heart receive its blessed influence, then will the old story be ever fresh and new."

7—9. (7) law, the word-revelation of God. Lord, *Jehovah*, no longer *El*, as *v.* 1. Jehovah is the name for the God of revelation and covenant. perfect, in sense of perfectly adapted to man's good. converting, *etc.*, lit. *refreshing the spirit*. testimony, prob. refers to the *Decalogue*. simple, sincere, willing to obey.[a] (8) statutes, or relig. ordinances. pure, bright; it may be compared to the light in its illuminating influence.[b] (9) fear,[c] godly, reverent, trustful fear. Or it is put for *worship*.[d] clean, requiring, and culturing moral purity. judgments, final awards of the Giver of law.

*The restoration of the soul* (*v.* 7).—I. Inquire what is meant by conversion in the text (see margin). 1. From the darkness of ignorance to the light of Divine knowledge; 2. From the weight of guilt to a state of acceptance with God; 3. From inward depravity to a conformity to the moral image of God; 4. From a state of misery to the possession of real happiness. II. The means by which this restoration of the soul is effected (see margin); this doctrine is perfect. 1. Divine in its origin; 2. Pure in the means of its communication; 3. Harmonious and well adapted to man in all its parts; 4. Energetic in its operations. Learn—(1) It must be understood by those who would communicate it; (2) Preachers must themselves be restored by it; (3) When known and enjoyed and preached the Holy Spirit sets His seal upon it; (4) By such preachers God carries on the work of restoring souls; (5) Learn also the need and utility of helping Bible and missionary societies.[e]

*God's law perfect* (*v.* 7).—An eminent lawyer, who had not read the Bible, and was doubtful about its being God's word, asked a Christian friend to tell him what books he should read to satisfy his mind. His friend said, "Read the Bible itself." The inquirer thought his question had been misunderstood. He wanted some books that would say something about the Bible. But his friend said, "No; I will not send you to other books. Read the Bible for yourself." The lawyer obtained a Bible. "Where shall I begin?" said he. "Oh, begin at the beginning, and read it through." The Christian called upon him now and then, and was delighted to find that he continued to read. One day the friend found the doubter walking up and down his room full of thought. He inquired what subject occupied his mind so completely. "I have been reading," said he, "the moral law in the Book of Exodus." "Well, what do you think of it?" "Why, I have been trying whether I can add anything to it, but I can't; and I have considered whether there is anything that can be taken from it, so as to make it better, and I cannot. It is perfect."

—*The book-mark.*—A correspondent of a foreign journal relates the following:—"A young lady once presented me with a book-mark, having the inscription, 'God bless you,' and exacted a promise that it should be placed in my Bible, but never to remain a day opposite the same chapter. Faithful to my promise, I took was completed, upon her asking him what book she should now take, "Oh," exclaimed he, "let us begin the Bible."

*a* 2 Tim. iii. 15; Matt. xi. 25; 1 Cor. i. 27.

*b* Ac. xxvi. 18; Eph. i. 18.

"The revealed way in which God is to be feared." — *Delitzsch.*

*d* "I have delighted in the brightness of Thy temple. Thy creatures have been my books; but Thy Scriptures much more. I have sought Thee in the courts, fields, and gardens; I have found Thee in Thy temples." —*Lord Bacon.*

*e Theta*, in 400 Sks.

Tertullian, late in the third century, states that pious husbands and wives were accustomed to repeat psalms thus interchangeably. Domestic worship may in this way be rendered more social.

In France a man was selling Bibles at the gate of a city. He held one in his hand, and called out to everybody, "Here is all the gold in the world for a shilling." A little boy came to him and bought a Bible for a shilling. He took it home. He was converted. His father and mother were also converted

fr. reading God's words and commandments. He died full of joy. He found out that his shilling Bible was worth more than all the gold in the world. Why is the Bible better than gold?

*vv.* 7, 8. *E. Denison*, 131; *E. Irving*, iii. 781.

*vv.* 7—10. *Bp. Wilson*, 1.

*v.* 8. *J. J. S. Cellerier*, ii. 29; *B. C. Snowden*, 207.

*a* Ps. cxix. 72, 127; Pr. viii. 19.

*b* "To be forewarned is to be forearmed."

*c Dr. T. Edwards.*

*Coleridge* says that the fairest flower he ever saw climbing round a poor man's window was not so beautiful in his eyes as the Bible which was lying within.

*v.* 10. *T. Dorrington*, ii. 101; *D. Dickson*, 25; *W. C. Wilson*, ii. 59; *T. Chevallier, Huls. Lec.* 157.

*a* Plainly this Ps. was written before Dav. fell into wilful transgressions.

"Secret sins, or hidden sins, need cleansing, *i.e.* both pardon and expiation."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Job xix. 25.

*c Dr. Todd.*

One pleasing variation is the responsive method of reciting

it home, and rubbing from the lids of my Bible the dust of a week, I placed it in the first chapter of Matthew, and daily read a chapter and changed its place. I had not read long before I became interested as I had never been before in this good book; and I saw in its truths that I was a sinner, and must repent if I would be saved. I then promised God that I would seek His face at the earliest opportunity, and if he saw fit to convert my soul, that I would spend my life in His cause. It came; I sought His face and received the smiles of His love, and now I have a hope within me 'big with immortality;' and all do I attribute to that book-mark and the grace of God. And this was the beginning of a great revival at S——. Many sought His face and found it; and the flame kindled there spread over the entire district, and scores were brought into the Church of God. 'Despise not the day of small things.' A word spoken in season—a simple Christian act—a sincere, simple prayer, may turn a poor wandering sinner from the error of his ways."

10, 11. (10) **than gold**, the object of search, and the most desirable thing in the Psalmist's days. Frequent reference is made to it.[a] **honeycomb**, 1 Sa. xiv. 27, Heb. *the dropping of honeycombs*. (11) **warned**, and so guarded from evils.[b]

*The richest treasure* (*v.* 10).—Emigration, gold-seeking. Two thoughts suggested for our consideration. I. The implied truth, that gold is valuable, and of course desirable. II. The expressed truth—that the teachings of God's Word, and conformity to them, are of infinitely greater value. 1. Because so far as wealth is concerned, the Bible shows the right way of getting it; 2. They give directly the blessings obtained indirectly by the possession of wealth; 3. Bible principles can alone make wealth a blessing; 4. Without those principles wealth is vain, and in the end worse for the soul.[c]

*Honey and the honeycomb* (*v.* 10).—We speak of the sweetness of honey without making any such distinctions of quality as are here implied. But whoever has eaten honey newly taken out of a honeycomb, or chewed the fresh honeycomb before the cups or cells have been opened, is sensible of a peculiar delicacy of flavour, which will be sought for in vain after the honey has for any length of time been expressed or clarified. The Moors of Western Barbary esteem honey a wholesome breakfast, and the most delicious that which is in the comb.

12—14. (12) **errors**, sins of inadvertency.[a] **secret**, *etc.*, those hidden even from our own apprehension: "sins which even those of the most tender conscience may be unconscious of." (13) **presumptuous**, "sins done with a high hand," as Nu. xv. 27—31. **great**, fully developed, violently wilful. (14) **strength**, rock. **redeemer**,[b] Ge. xlviii. 16.

*Secret sins* (*v.* 12).—I. Why are secret sins so dangerous? 1. Change of place and circumstances does not aid you to break away from them; 2. They produce a continual warfare between the conscience and the desires of the heart; 3. They return often; 4. They counteract and destroy the means of grace; 5. They give the tempter great power over you. II. What are remedies for secret sins. 1. Feel that they are sins; 2. Be much in prayer; 3. Fly from temptations; 4. Be constantly mindful of the presence of God.[c]

*The Redeemer* (*v.* 14).—Among those to whom the labours of the late Mr. Williams, of the London Missionary Society, were made useful, a chief named Sicana deserves particular notice. This individual survived his teacher a few months only. Under his last illness, Sicana's mind was elevated above the world by the hope of eternal blessedness. Feeling that he had but a short time to live, he continued, so long as he was able to speak, explaining to those around him the nature and importance of the Christian hope: exhorting them at the same time to faith in Christ, and to cleave to the missionaries, and to the profession some of them had made, whatever sacrifices their constancy might cost them; and he expired in the midst of his people, in a truly Christian manner, resigning his soul into the hands of that Saviour who had redeemed him, exclaiming, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly; I commit my soul into Thy hands: it is Thine, for Thou hast redeemed it by Thy blood."—*The hidden treasure.*—There died in the city of Lyons a poor widow, who had been so fortunate as to become possessed of great treasure in her old age. Her parents were very poor, and her husband had nothing but his industry to depend on; as long, however, as he was able to work, they honestly gained their daily bread, though they were never able to put anything by for a rainy day. But when the old man died, leaving his poor widow childless and infirm, want entered her desolate dwelling as an armed man. She sold everything but what was indispensable, and removed to a miserable garret, to spend the remainder of her days. She was not entirely without some feeling of dependence upon the God of the fatherless and the widow; but she was a poor Romanist, and knew much more about saints and guardian angels than of Jesus Christ, and what He has done for us. One day, as she was sitting alone in her comfortless, half-empty room, it struck her that there was a singular outline on the beams of the wall. The walls had been whitewashed; but she thought it looked as if there had been a square opening in one of them, which had been carefully closed with a kind of door. She examined it more closely, and the thought occurred to her, "Perhaps there is some treasure hidden there;" for she remembered, as a child, the fearful days of the Revolution, when no property was safe from the men of liberty and equality. Perhaps some rich man had concealed his treasure there from their rapacity, who had himself fallen a victim to the revolution before he had time to remove it. And perhaps one of the saints, to whom she daily prayed, had preserved it there for her, to sweeten the evening of her days. She tapped with her finger, and the boards returned a hollow sound. With beating heart she tried to remove the square door, and soon succeeded, without much difficulty: but, alas! instead of the gold and silver she hoped to see, she beheld a damp, dirty, mouldy old book! In her disappointment she was ready to fix in the boards again, and leave the book to mould and crumble away; but a secret impulse induced her to take it out, and see if there were any bank notes or valuable papers in it; but no, it is nothing but a book, a mouldy book! When she had recovered from her vexation, she began to wonder what book it could be that some one had hidden away so carefully. It must surely be something extraordinary. So she wiped it clean, and set herself to read. Her eyes fell upon the words, "Therefore I say unto

psalms at family worship; the parent or some one else leading off with a verse or strophe, and followed alternately by a child, or by the whole household.

The meaning of the word here rendered "errors" is about equivalent to the modern English use of it, though there are passages in the Scriptures where it evidently has a deeper meaning. Sins of inadvertence or infirmity, contrasted with wilful or "presumptuous" sins, are pointed at here; and the secret faults named are evidently not merely those which we hide from others, but those which through carelessness or delusion are hidden from ourselves.

A German prince was once visiting the arsenal of Toulon, and was told that in compliment to his rank he might set free one of the galley-slaves. Anxious to use the privilege well, he spoke to many of them, and asked the cause of their punishment. All declared it unjust, till he came to one who confessed his sin and deplored it, saying, "I acknowledge I deserve to be broken on the wheel." The prince exclaimed, "This is the man I wish to be released."

It is commonly said, that "Re-

venge is sweet:" but it can only be so to those weak minds that are incapable of bearing an injury. An elevated mind is superior to injuries, and pardons them. The Emperor Adrian, meeting a man who had insulted him before he came to the government, said to him, "Approach, you have nothing to fear; I am an emperor."

r. 12. *J. Hoole*, i. 193; *Bp. Sherlock*, ii. 182; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 392; *J. H. Newman*, i. 47; *J. Howlett*, ii. 317; *Dr. W. S. Done*, 155.

you, take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye shall put on. Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air: they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?" And the words that she read appeared to her so sweet and precious, that she read on and on during the whole day, and far into the night, almost forgetting to eat or sleep. The next morning she sat down again to the damp old book, the words of which made an ever-deepening impression on her soul. She began to see that she had indeed found a treasure, and an invaluable one. Her little chamber no longer looked so desolate; her food, which had so often seemed to her as the bread of tears, now appeared to her more like bread from heaven; and her solitude was relieved by the presence of the great King, from whose book of gracious words, streams of blessedness flowed. She had the book cleaned and bound, and it was to her as meat and drink, by day and by night, until she was permitted to close her eyes and enter into the joy of her Lord. She related this history, in the latter days of her pilgrimage, to a beloved pastor in Lyons, in whose hands the blessed book is now. It is Amelotte's edition of the New Testament, of the time of the Huguenot persecution.

## *PSALM THE TWENTIETH.*

author,—prob. David

*A Psalm for a king going to battle.*

1—5. (1) hear thee, gracious hearing involves suitable answer. name of, put for the manifested perfections, as power, wisdom, etc. defend thee,[a] as marg., *set* thee on a high place. (2) sanctuary, term suitable to the reign of Dav., before the temple was built. Zion, where the sanctuary was. (3) thy offerings, special sacrifices were connected with military expeditions.[b] accept, lit. *make fat*, regard as fat, so befitting the occasion. (4) own heart, the victory thou dost desire. (5) rejoice, shout as in hours of victory. set up, or wave our banners, in the forward march.

*Mutual benediction* (*vv.* 1—4).—I. A brief expository analysis of this intercessory prayer. 1. We have the recognition of Jehovah; 2. The dwelling-place of Jehovah; 3. The earthly spot, and covenanted arrangements in connection with which God from on high pours down His blessing. II. Some practical applications arising out of this view of religion. 1. The Lord is willing to send help if we are willing to invoke it: 2. We are required to call or He will not hear: 3. We must call at the right spot: 4. This strength is not only to be obtained in Zion, but it is to be carried out of Zion into our daily life.[c]

*Bearer of banners.*—In the early part of the late war, during one of the severest battles, as our forces were pressing forward in face of the enemy, the standard-bearer, being a mark for the rebel sharpshooter, fell. The soldier next to him caught the falling banner, while the ranks closing over him pressed onward. Soon he fell. Again, another comrade caught the falling banner and pressed onward. As I read the incident I raised my eyes to heaven and almost despairingly cried, "Who shall carry our nation's banner?" A few weeks ago, as I looked over our *Zion*

*a* Ps. lx. 9, xviii. 3.

*b* "The offerings consisted both of the *manchet*, fine flour, and oil and frankincense; and whole burnt-offerings, representing the gratitude and absolute devotion of the worshippers." — *Spk. Com.*

*c B. Grant, B.A.*

*d Christian Advo.*

*v.* 1. *Dr. M. Holl*, i. 570.

*vv.* 1, 2. *H. Verschoyle*, 92.

*v.* 5. *Abp. Potter*, i. 227.

in ——, so thinned by death and desertion, I felt to make the same cry. "Who shall carry our banner?" But He who loved and saved our nation hath loved and saved us, and just sent us a reinforcement from our Bible classes and Sunday school of new recruits, bold and brave, who, I humbly trust, when we fall will catch the falling banner and press forward, copying the fidelity of our noble heroes, to sure and certain victory, which may God grant, for His Name's sake. Amen.[d]

6—9. (6) know I, either the king now speaks, in response to his people, or the high priest speaks on behalf of the people. anointed, so Dav. is often spoken of. (7) chariots, *etc.*, regarded as formidable enemies.[a] (8) they are, going forth in faith, they fully anticipate the triumph over their foes.[b] (9) save, render, "Save the king, O Lord; may He (Jehovah) hear hear us when we call."

*Chariots and horses* (*v.* 7).—We have here—I. The variety and vanity of all earthly sources of confidence. They point out to us—1. The tendency of man to trust in the creature rather than the Creator; 2. The vanity of the creature is demonstrated by its incoustancy; 3. By its limited power and its brief duration. II. The foundation of Christian peace and courage. God's people have reason to trust Him—1. From the history of the past; 2. From their own experience: 3. From the covenant of grace.

*The Psalms.*—The Jewish Psalms, in which is expressed the very spirit of the national life, have furnished the bridal hymns, the battle songs, the pilgrim marches, the penitential prayers, and the public praises of every nation in Christendom since Christendom was born. These psalms have rolled through the din of every great European battle field, they have pealed through the scream of the storm in every ocean highway of the earth. Drake's sailors sang them when they clove the virgin waves of the Pacific, Frobisher's when they dashed against the barriers of the Arctic ice and night. They floated over the waters on that day of glad days when England held her Protestant freedom against Pope and Spaniard, and won the naval supremacy of the world. They crossed the ocean with the *May Flower* pilgrims; they were sung round Cromwell's camp fires, and his Ironsides charged to their music; while they have filled the peaceful homes of our land and of Christendom with the voicé of supplication and the breath of praise. In palace halls, by happy hearths, in squalid rooms, in pauper wards, in prison cells, in crowded sanctuaries, in lonely wildernesses, everywhere these Jews have uttered our moan of contrition and our song of triumph, our tearful complaints and our wrestling, conquering prayer.[c]

## *PSALM THE TWENTY-FIRST.*

author,—prob. David

*Psalm for king returning triumphant. Regarded as a Messianic psalm.*

1—6. (1) king, Targ. reads *King. Messiah.* (2) heart's desire, comp. Ps. xx. 4. (3) preventest, goeth before me, so that I must regard Thy ways as altogether of grace. crown, *see* 2 Sa. xii. 30.[a] (4) life, safety in the time of danger. ever and ever,[b] fig. for deliv. fr. repeated dangers (5) glory, the honour that has come on him. (6) blessed, or blessings, as marg.

*God going before us* (*v.* 3).—The word prevent now means to

a Comp. Ps. viii. 5; Re. vi. 2.

b Some com.



a "The horse is only once mentioned in connection with agriculture, and the foreign usage of war-horses is discountenanced in many passages. Consequently war-chariots were little used by the Hebrews, and were regarded by them as peculiarly formidable. Jos. xvii. 16, xxxi. 1; Ju. i. 19, iv. 3."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

b "Great certainly is the faith wh. hath such courage by remembering the name of the Lord. Soldiers in our day are wont, when they go into battle, to recall to mind the brave exploits of their fathers, or former victories, and the like, wherewith to warm and stir their hearts."—*Luther.*

"How sweet is his smile inwhose countenance heaven lieth! Ps. xxi. 6."—*Fleming.*

c *J. Baldwin Brown, B.A.*

d

think this express. refers to the endless life of Messiah. But comp. familiar expression, "Let the king live for ever. 1 Ki. i. 31.
*c S. Martin.*
*d Dr. R. Wardlaw.*
*v.* 1. *Dr. D. Featley*, 69.
*vv.* 1, 2. *H. Verschoyle*, 109.
*vv.* 1—3. *Abp. Wake*, iii. 275.
*vv.* 1—4. *Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 101.

*a Fausset.*

*b C. Simeon, M.A.*

Prayer is the key of the day and the lock of the night. And we should every day begin and end, bid ourselves good-morrow and good-night, with prayer. This will make our labour prosperous and our rest sweet.

*v.* 7. *Abp. Dawes, Wks.* i. 554.

*a* "The shooting against their faces would cause them to turn their backs in flight."—*Fausset.*
*b C. H. Spurgeon.*

author,—David

*A Psalm of Messiah's sufferings.*

*Aijeleth Shahar*, hind of the morning; prob. name of a tune.
*a* Ps. xlii. 5, 11, lxxxviii. 14, 15; Matt. xxvii. 46.
"It is the question of faith as well as of anguish that cannot be told. For he who asks 'why,' nevertheless

hinder. It used to mean, to go before. This the meaning here. Our subject is, God's anticipation of our necessities by His merciful dispensation. I. God prevents us with the blessings of His goodness when we come into the world. II. When we become personal transgressors. III. When we enter upon the duties and cares of mature life. IV. When in the general course of life we enter upon new paths. V. In the dark valley of the shadow of death. VI. By giving us many mercies without our asking for them. VII. By storing heaven with every provision for our blessedness.*c*—*The glory of God in Christ's living for ever* (*v.* 4).—The glory of God is concerned in Christ's living for ever. I. The glory of His faithfulness. II. The glory of His justice. III. The glory of His grace. Thus the power of God and all His moral attributes secure the perpetuity of the life of the risen and exalted Saviour.*d*

7—10. (7) for . . moved, "the mediate cause is the king's faith, the efficient, God's mercy."*a* (8) by hand, these words appear to be addressed *to the king*. *Hand* is sign of power, *right hand* of the most vigorous power. (9) fiery oven, illus. 2 Sa. xii. 31. (10) fruit, or children. Ancient conquests were usually attended with what we now regard as exceeding cruelties.

*The kingdom of David and Christ* (*v.* 7).—This Psa. appointed to be read on the day of our Lord's ascension. We will—I. Explain it. 1. Primarily it expresses David's gratitude on his advancement to the throne of Israel; 2. It is yet more applicable to Christ, as expressing His feelings on His ascension to the throne of glory. II. Show what improvement we should make of it. 1. From its literal sense we learn how thankful we should be for the blessings vouchsafed to us; 2. From its mystical sense we learn what should be our disposition towards our Lord Jesus Christ. Enter into His joy, confide in His care, seek to enlarge His kingdom.*b*

11—13. (11) intended, plotted. (12) back, lit. *the shoulder*, a common expression for putting to flight.*a* (13) thou . . O Lord, a final ascription of all the glory is made to God.

*A devout doxology* (*v.* 13).—I. God exalted. II. God alone exalted. III. God exalted by His own strength. IV. His people singing His praise.*b*

## *PSALM THE TWENTY-SECOND.*

1, 2. (1) why, not the word of impatience or despair, nor of sinful questioning, but the natural expression of deep and surprisiug suffering.*a* roaring,*b* he compares himself to a beast in pain. The cry forced forth from extremest suffering. (2) not silent, *lit.* not silence to me. Je. xiv. 17.

*A sketch of suffering sainthood* (*v.* 1).—Regarding this Psa. in this light it falls into two general sections. I. The prayer of the righteous under great suffering. 1. The sufferings are spiritual, social; 2. The supplications are intensely earnest, ultimately successful. II. The relief of the rightcous from great suffering. 1. The instrumental cause of the relief—Prayer; 2. The blessed results of the relief—the celebration of Divine goodness, the conversion of the world to the true God, the celebration of His religion to the end of time.*c*

*Titles of books* (see title of Ps).—The titles of books and poems in the East are usually allusive or descriptive, not so much of the subject on which they are written, as to some particular event or natural object. So it appears in the following extract:—"Among several manuscripts which I purchased soon after our arrival at Ispahan, was a poetical work composed during the full splendour of this palace—the original perfection of its waterworks, and beauty of its shady avenues, and of the luxuriant flowers that embellished their variegated borders. It is entitled the 'Gulzar-e-Saadet,' or rosebud of prosperity, a poem in praise of the gardens and edifices at Saadetábád, composed about a hundred and ten years ago." "At Ispahan the covers of books are ornamented in a style peculiarly rich, and they often exhibit miniatures painted with considerable neatness, and admirably varnished. I purchased many loose covers, of different sizes, containing representations of the finest Persian flowers, delineated from nature, in exquisite colours, and with minute accuracy."[d]

3—5. (3) holy, therefore cannot have changed; must be the same in the darkness as heretofore in the light. inhabitest, art throned on.[a] "God is regarded as enthroned on the praises addressed towards the Shechinah." praises, songs offered to God on account of His attributes and deeds. (4) trusted, in the midst of dark and trying scenes. (5) cried, the term implies that the Fathers, like the Psalmist, had their times of doubting and distress.

*Unbelief* (*v.* 5).—Consider the sin charged upon Israel. I. The sin charged upon Israel is twofold. 1. They believed not in God, as contrasted with other gods, or as the one living and true God; 2. They believed not in His great salvation to be achieved by the promised seed. II. The consequences which attend this sin pointed out in the word because. 1. Because, etc., they are left to become the dupes of delusion and error: 2. They remain slaves of sin; 3. They taste not joy, peace and true felicity; 4. They are subject to fear of death, and despair of eternal happiness; 5. They will be subject to the wrath of God. III. The reasons which should induce us to believe in God. 1. The essential immutability of His nature; 2. The infallible certainty of His Word; 3. The preparation He has made for our salvation; 4. The impossibility of finding salvation in any other way. IV. The means to be employed. 1. Contemplation of our own weakness and insufficiency: 2. Study of His character and faithfulness. His Word, grace, Gospel, etc.; 3. Diligent attendance upon hearing; 4. Fervent prayer for His Divine assistance.

*Trust in Providence* (*v.* 5).—The Rev. John Eyre's trust in God's providence was a remarkable feature in his religion; and never did that Providence forsake him or his. When in early life his father drove him from his home for preaching the Gospel of Christ, he said, "Now, sir, I take God for my father and friend, and if ever I am reduced to want, you may blame my religion." But he was never thus reduced, though he often knew what it was to have his faith severely tried. Once, however, his supplies failed him, and he had neither the means left of paying for his own refreshment, or that of his horse. In this anxious state, and in the midst of strangers, he called at a house on his journey, where, to his surprise, he found a letter addressed to him containing two guineas from an unknown friend.

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less calls God 'my God,' and repeats the appropriating word again and again with the very emphasis of faith."—*Perowne.*

*b* "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me? *Such are* the words of my roaring."—*Hupfeld.*

*c Dr. D. Thomas.*

*d Sir W. Ouseley.*

*a* "Sitting on the praises of Israel as on a throne, as Thou art enthroned upon the cherubim."—*Wordsworth.*

What words did our Saviour employ when breathing His final address to the Father, and closing up the wondrous work of atonement? Breaking forth into an appeal, that smites the heart with mysterious dread, He adopts the opening of the twenty-second Psalm. And tradition reports that He repeated the whole word for word.

An excellent old woman showed an old nail as one of her greatest treasures, saying, "I prize it because it shuts out the world." She used it to fasten the latch of the door when she went alone to pray.

6—8. (6) worm,[a] Heb. *tolcah*, the cochineal, which yields scarlet juice, fr. wh. scarlet dye is produced.[b] The term denotes utter helplessness and humiliation. no man, *i.e.* I am an insignificant person—a nobody. despised, Is. liii. 3. (7) shoot . . lip, express. denoting "open-mouthed ferocity."[c] shake the head, this may express compassion. here it expresses malicious joy. (8) trusted, fig. rolled himself on. The clause should be rendered, "Commit it unto Jehovah: yes, He will deliver him." So it is the actual language of the taunt.[d] seeing, this is spoken in bitter irony.

*Thankfulness and praise.*—Let not thy praises be transient—a fit of music, and then the instrument hung by the wall till another gaudy day of some remarkable providence makes thee take it down. God will not sit at such a niggard's table, who invites Him to a thanksgiving feast once for all the year. God comes not guest-wise to His saints' house, but to dwell with them; "He inhabits the praises of His people" (Psa. xxii. 3). That day thou blessest not God thou turnest Him out of doors. David took this up for a life work, "As long as I live will I praise Thee." "A lying tongue is but for a moment," saith Solomon (Prov. xii. 19). Something drops from a liar within a while that discovers his falsehood; the tongue that lies in praising of God is thus for a moment; he can curse God with that tongue to-morrow with which he praiseth Him to-day.[e]

9—11. (9) but, *etc.*, "with this express. he establishes the reality of the loving relationship to God, at wh. his foes mock."[a] took me,[b] *etc.*, strong express. for the gracicusness of God's care from his very birth. make me hope, or madest me secure. (10) cast on thee, God's care is deeper than a mother's, and works through hers. (11) far . . near, be not Thou *far*, for trouble is *near*, so there is present and immediate need of Thy help.

*Hope as an instinct of the soul* (*v.* 9).—I. This instinct implies the distinguishing goodness of God in the constitution of our nature. 1. Hope is one of the most powerful impulses to action; 2. One of the chief elements of support under the trials of life; 3. A source of joy. II. This instinct of hope suggests a future state of existence—1. On the ground of analogy; 2. On the ground of the Divine goodness. III. This instinct means that progress in blessedness is the original law of our being. IV. It shows the fitness of Christianity to human nature. 1. It reveals future scenes of unending blessedness; 2. It supplies man with the means by which it is to be attained. V. It indicates the congruity of the religious life with our nature. Learn:—1. The greatest calamity that can happen to your nature is the extinction of this hope; 2. The tendency of sin is to destroy this instinct.[c]

12—15. (12) bulls, the fig. of brutal strength and wilfulness.[a] Bashan, extending from the Jabbok to Mount Hermon, and eastward to the extreme boundary of Palestine. Celebrated for its fat pastures.[b] (13) gaped, opening a wide mouth, as a lion in his roaring. ravening,[c] seeking prey. (14) poured, *etc.*, comp. our Lord's fainting on the cross.[d] out of joint, stretched, as on a rack, from their sockets. like wax, softened with anguish. (15) dried up, with thirst. dust of death, *i.e.* death must be the end. Still He sees God's hand in it all.

*a* Job xxv. 6; Is. xli. 14.

*b* "The point of comparison is not the blood-red appearance, but the suffering, so utterly defenceless and even ignominious." — *Delitzsch.*

*c* Job xvi. 10; Ps. xxxv. 21; La. ii. 15, 16. Comp. Matt. xxvii. 39—43; Lu. xxiii. 35.

*d* Matt. xxvii. 42, 43.

*e* Dr. W. K. Done, 186; J. Newton, iv. 240.

*a* Delitzsch.

*a* "Faith turns the mockery of his enemies into an argument of deliverance, 'They mock my trust in Thee; yea, I do trust in Thee; for Thou art He,' etc." — *Perowne.*

*b* "Throughout the O.T. there is never any mention made of a human father, or begetter, to the Messiah, but always only of His mother, or her who bare Him." — *Delitzsch.*

*c* Dr. D. Thomas.

*a* "No deep ethical sense is to be given to such representations of the Psalmist's foes. 'Lions,' 'dogs,' 'bulls,' are introduced merely bec. his foes exhibit the savage, *brutal*

*Praying and waiting.*—We must do, in this case, as an angler doth when he hath thrown his bait into the river. If it stay long and catch nothing, he takes up the bait, and amends it; and when he sees it is well, he then continues, and waits; so we must in this case. If thou pray, and pray long, and have not obtained the thing thou prayest for, look diligently to thy prayers; see whether they be right or no. If they be not, amend thy prayers, and God will amend His readiness to hear thee; if thou find they be sincere and hearty, mingled with holy desires, then let the bait lie still—that is, continue to pray and to wait, and the Lord will come in due time.[e]

16—18. (16) **dogs**, regarded in Sc. as unclean creatures.[a] In the E. they are mostly savage and wild. **pierced**, *etc.*, Matt. xxvii. 35. (17) **tell**, or count; by reason of extreme emaciation.[b] **stare**, with the complacency of a foe who has gained his cruel end. (18) **part**, *etc.*, Lu. xxiii. 34; Jno. xix. 23, 24. "This would only occur in the case of one who had been stripped as a preliminary to execution."

*Darling* (*v.* 20).—Psa. xxii. 20, xxxv. 17. "Only," "unicus." Of the "soul," that treasure of man, to which the whole world should be as nothing. Ang.-Sax., *deor-ling*, a diminutive, like *gos-ling*. Precious to David was his "soul" or "life," for the Hebrew word means both, and it is only by the context that we can discriminate. Another word found sometimes parallel with "life" or "soul," and thus tantamount to it, is "honour." as in Psa. vii. 5 :—"Let him tread down my *life* upon the earth, and lay mine *honour* in the dust."

19—22. (19) **thou far**, as *vv.* 1, 11. **strength**, "a Heb. word only used here; source or substance of all strength, with special reference to physical exhaustion."[a] (20) **soul**, or self. **my darling**, my only one, or solitary one, as desolate and afflicted.[b] **power . . dog**, *lit.* the hand;[c] it appears to point to the agents or executioners. (21) **unicorns**, Nu. xxiii. 22, here *wild bulls*.[d] (22) **declare**,[e] *etc.*, the language of dawning hope. **brethren**, fellow men, and fellow sufferers.[f]

*The unicorn* (*v.* 21).—This word occurs nine times in the English Version, for the Hebrew *reem*, as the name of some large animal. Our translation agrees with the usual rendering to be found in the Greek Septuagint and the Latin Vulgate. Our own translators appear to have supposed that the rhinoceros was meant, as they place that word in the margin at Isa. xxxiv. 7. It is almost certain that the ancients thought a one-horned animal of some kind was intended, although Deut. xxxiii. 17 should have taught them better, because the Hebrew there reads "the horns of a unicorn," which shows the animal had more horns than one. The moderns take the *reem* to be some kind of ox, bison, or buffalo. This explanation is mentioned by Cruden; namely, that the *reem* was a "kind of wild oxen or bulls called *uri*." This animal, called by naturalists *bos primigenius*, at one time prevailed over a great part of Europe and Asia, but is now almost entirely extinct. It certainly existed in Palestine, where its bones have been discovered in caves. Dr. Tristram, who has collected all the facts, says :—"After a careful examination of the subject, there cannot now remain a doubt on the identity of the *reem* or unicorn with the historic *urus* or anerochs, now indeed the 'ox of yore.'"

character of these creatures." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* De. xxxii. 14; Eze. xxxix. 18; Am. iv. 1.

*c* From *rapine*, also written *ravin*, food obtained by violence.

*d* Matt. xxvii. 32.

*e J. Preston* (1632).

*a* Prophetic allusion to the fierce Rom. soldiery, whose touch was an offence to the pure Jew; and who were the agents of the actual crucifixion.

*b* "The body of the crucified is a living lesson in anatomy."—*Spk. Com.*

*a Spk. Com.* Comp. Lu. xxii. 43.

*b* Ps. xxv. 16, xxxv. 17.

*c* 1 Sa. xvii. 37; Is. xlvii. 14; "hand of the flame."

*d* Job xxxix. 9.

*e* He. ii. 12.

*f* Comp. Mat. xxviii. 10; Jno. xx. 17.

"While the prayer of faith," says an eloquent Welsh preacher, "is sure to succeed, our prayers, alas! too often resemble the mischievous tricks of children in a town, who knock at their neighbours' houses, and then run away. We often knock at mercy's door, and then run away, instead of waiting for an entrance and an answer. Thus we act as if we were afraid of having our prayers answered."

23—27. (23) fear the Lord, with reverence and trust. praise Him, for gracious deliv. afforded to His servant.[a] (24) despised, all these express. are toned by the shame gathering round a death by crucifixion. affliction, Is. liii. 4, 7. hath he hid, this was the *fact*, for the Psalmist's *feeling*, see *v.* 1. (25) of thee, perhaps *from Thee*, as if God Himself should give the song. pay my vows, wh. had been made in the time of trouble. (26) eat, as at a thanksgiving feast.[b] live for ever, comp. Pro. vi. 51. (27) all, *etc.*, "the anticipation of a general conversion of the heathen belongs to Dav.'s sphere of thought."[c]

*The spread of true religion* (*v.* 27). Here we have—I. Religion described as an act of—1. Memory; 2. Of repentance; 3. Worship. II. Its prevalence foretold. I. It has already been partially fulfilled: 2. There is no improbability of its entire fulfilment; 3. The Holy Spirit's agency will secure it.[d]—*The conversion of the Gentiles.*—I. The nature of true conversion. II. The extent of conversion under the reign of the Messiah.[e]

28—31. (28) kingdom . . Lord's, a theocratical truth. and an evangelical prophecy. (29) fat, fig. for mighty ones. none . . soul, the poor, who have only the barest means of subsistence. (30) seed, the posterity of the present race. "Each succeeding generation of worshippers."[a] "A never-failing seed."[b] Comp. Is. liii. 10. (31) they shall come, comp. Is. liii. 11.

*The soul* (*v.* 29).—A little girl, about seven years of age, was taken with a brother younger than herself, to see an aunt who lay dead. On their return home, the little boy expressed his surprise that he had seen his aunt, saying, "I always thought that when people died they went to heaven; but my aunt is not gone thither, for I have seen her!" "Brother," replied his sister, "I fear you do not understand it; it is not the body that goes to heaven! it is the *think* that goes to heaven! the body remains and is put into the grave, where it keeps till God shall raise it up again. The body returns to the dust as it was, and the spirit to God who gave it."

## *PSALM THE TWENTY-THIRD.*

1—3. (1) shepherd, forcible fig. in view of the dangers of Eastern shepherding.[a] not want, Pr. Bk. Vers. is forcible, "therefore can I lack nothing." (2) green pastures, bright green bcc. covered with *fresh* grass:[b] an oasis. still waters, or *waters of quietness*; reference is to well-watered oases, rather than to gently flowing streams. (3) restoreth, or refresheth, as with rest and food. paths of righteousness, or of security and peace. his name's sake, not for my deserts. Ez. xxxvii. 22.

*The Shepherd of souls* (*v.* 1).—I. The person set forth. 1. His Divine perfections—Lord; 2. His mediatorial relation—shepherd; 3. His personal affinity—my shepherd. II. The inference deduced. No want of—1. Appropriate food; 2. Of needful rest; 3. Of guidance in the way; 4. Of restorative mercy; 5. Of comfort in the night.[c]

*The Lord is my Shepherd* (*v.* 1).—Some years ago, a minister in Scotland, riding his Highland pony along a green lane, overheard a young voice repeating, "The Lord is my Shepherd." He stopped,

*a* Sometimes God delivers *from* the cross, at other times He delivers *through* the cross.
*b* "The sense is equally good and true in reference to the Antitype, whose sacrificed body, offered once for all on the cross, is given as spiritual food to the faithful in the Eucharist."—*Spk. Com.*
*c* Ps. ii. 8, xviii. 49, lxxii. 11, lxxxvi. 9.
*d* *W. Whythe.*
*e* *A. Fuller.*

*a* *Spk. Com.*
*b* *Wordsworth.*
"The Psalter forms, as it were, a little Bible for all saints, in which every man, in whatever situation he may be placed, shall find psalms and sentiments which shall apply to his own case, and be the same to him as if they were for his own sake alone, so expressed as he could not express them himself, nor find nor even wish them better than they are."

author,—David

*A Ps. on the loving care of God, prob. composed in Dav.'s early life.*

*a* Ge. xlviii. 15, xlix. 24; Ps. lxxx. 1; Is. xl. 11; Je. xxxi. 10; Ez. xxxiv. 23; Jno. x. 27, 28.
*b* *Lie down* in Heb. is a technical word for letting flocks lie down at their case. Song Sol. i. 7. —*Jennings and Lowe.*
*c* *W. Whythe.*
"Beneath the burning skies,

crossed the pasture, and found a little boy, who tended a few sheep, busily engaged in committing these precious words to memory. He was the only son of his mother, and she a widow, poor and in feeble health. His father, who was a herdsman, had been killed by an enraged animal. His mother had given him this passage to learn, that he might think of the Lord as the Shepherd of his soul. The good man, on hearing these things, said to him, "Well, my child, what will you do if your mother becomes worse, and dies? Have you any friends to go to?" "Oh, no," he replied, "but my mother tells me that God's book says, "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." The aged pastor's heart was gladdened, and kneeling down on the green field, he prayed God to bless the lad, and be to him and do for him more than the best earthly parent. *Shepherd's staff and crook.*—The shepherd carried with him two instruments—the staff, for his own support, and to attack a beast or robber; and the crook, or rod. By this crook the shepherd guided a sheep in a dangerous pass, placing the crook under the sheep's neck, and holding him up to assist his steps. When a sheep was disposed to stray, the shepherd could hold him back with his crook. When the sheep had fallen into the power of a beast, the crook assisted in drawing him away. A good sheep loved the crook as much as the staff—to be guided as well as to be defended. Both of the shepherd's instruments were a great comfort to the sheep while passing through a frightful and dangerous valley. The interpretation usually given to the words, "Thy rod and Thy staff"—as though they meant "Thy gentle reproofs and Thy severe rebukes"—is erroneous. A sheep would hardly tell his shepherd that his chastising rod, and the heavy blows of his staff comforted him. The meaning is, it is a comfort to me to feel the crook of Thy rod helping me in trouble, and to know that Thy staff is my defence against wild beasts.

4—6. (4) **walk,** as sheep following their shepherd thro' a dark and trying road. **valley . . death,** "dark, deep, sunless ravine between mountains."[a] **thou,** my protecting Shepherd. **rod and staff,** rod to defend with, staff to walk and guide with.[b] (5) **preparest,** *etc.*, the common formula for furnishing a meal.[c] Comp. 2 Sa. xvii. 27—29. **anointest,** this was customary at banquets; *see* Lu. vii. 56. **runneth over,** so abundantly is it filled with blessings. (6) **for ever,** Heb. *to length of days.*

*A view of the future suggested by a review of the past* (*v.* 6).—I. The Psalmist's hope. 1. He hoped for goodness and mercy: his hope was coextensive with his life; the assurance of this hope is remarkable; 2. But how was such a hope suggested? He recognised goodness and mercy in his past experience, and in a Divine Providence, which, having ruled the past, would guide the future. He had confidence in the present and abiding favour of God towards him. II. The Psalm—its purpose: 1. Not that there is any proportion between His goodness and our service: 2. Poor as our best service is, it should be cheerfully rendered: 3. Let us now look upon the past, and seek to gather from it joyful hope and holy resolution.[d]

*Walking through the valley* (*v.* 4).—"Just as the Bibles were passing through my hands, a milkmaid from a village called with milk. As she passed me, I said, 'Good woman, can you read?' 'Yes, sir, in my own language.' 'What language is it?' The and the clear starry night of Palestine, there grows up between the shepherd and his flock a union of attachment and tenderness. It is the country where, at any moment, their protector may have to save them by personal hazard. — *F. W. Robertson.*

In an hour of holy and grateful musings, King David dwells upon his career before he "was taken from the sheepfold" onward. His whole course of early pastoral life, as well as later regal responsibilities, come under review; and, at the reminiscences of constant Divine care, his heart wells up in the glad testimony, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

*a* Je. xiii. 16.

De Wette quotes Moriet as illus. of the image of this *v.*:—"Near Ispahan is a valley, inconceivably dreary, desolate, waterless, called the valley of the angel of death."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Zec. xi. 7.

*c* Pr. ix. 2; Is. xxi. 5; Eze. xxiii. 41.

*d Dr. J. Parker.*

"A sense of God's presence in love is sufficient to rebuke all anxiety and fear in the worst and most dreadful condition."—*Owen.*

*e R. Knill.*

In hard times and dark days the Lord is no less my Shepherd. "He leadeth me beside the still waters." Sweet waters of repose from the holy fountain, God's Word,—how ye quiet and enchant the soul! Along your sacred margin may I ever be led, and on your faithful bosom discern the clear heaven above! At the summit of the Pulney Hills, in Southern India, may be seen the grave of one who lost his life in the midst of an overwhelming flood on the plain below. The memorial stone by that quiet grave bears this inscription: "David Cole Scudder. He leadeth me beside the still waters."

*v. 4. Bp. Burnet*, 141; *E. Erskine*, ii. 232; *W. Jay*, viii. 189; *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 381; *Dr. S. Evans*, 260; *Dr. S. Stennett*, i. 392; *E. Berens*, 55.

*f Weekly Visitor.*

Finnish.' 'Oh, here is a Finnish Bible; read the twenty-third Psalm.' She read very fluently until she came to the words, 'Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for Thou art with me: Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me;' and then her voice faltered; she began to weep, and returned me the book. 'Have you a Bible?' I inquired. 'No, sir; I never had money enough to buy one.' 'How much money have you now?' 'Only a rouble' (10d). 'Then give me,' said I, 'the rouble, and I will give you the book.' She looked at me with astonishment, but I said I meant what I told her, when she fumbled in her dress for the rouble, and gave it to me, and I handed her the Bible. The ecstasy of the woman cannot be described. She looked at it, opened it, shut it, and looked again, then pressed it to her heart, kissed it, and burst into tears."*f*—*The anointing oil and overflowing cup.*—In the East, the people frequently anoint their visitors with some very fragrant perfume, and give them a cup or a glass of some choice wine, which they are careful to fill till it runs over. The first was designed to show their love and respect: the latter to imply that while they remained there, they should have an abundance of everything. Mr. Griffin, in his *Memoirs of Captain James Wilson*, gives the following statement in the captain's own words:—"I once had this ceremony performed on myself in the house of a great and rich Indian, in the presence of a large company. The gentleman of the house poured upon my hands and arms a delightful odoriferous perfume, put a golden cup into my hands and poured wine into it till it ran over; assuring me at the same time, that it was a great pleasure to him to receive me, and that I should find a rich supply in his house." To something of this kind the Psalmist probably alludes in this passage. It is thus beautifully versified by the Rev. George Musgrave:—

> "Thou in the presence of an envious foe,
> My banquet spreading, pouring on my brow
> Anointing oil—and, lo! my flowing cup
> In copious stream. Thy bounty's gift declares,
> Thus, even thus, thro' all my days of life,
> I feel Thee ever near: Thy mercy's grace,
> The blessings of Thy love, my course attend.
> Oh, where but in Thy temple, in what home,
> For evermore shall David fix his rest,
> Save in the dwelling of his Lord and God!"*f*

## *PSALM THE TWENTY-FOURTH.*

**1, 2.** (1) the earth, not a mere portion of it, such as the heathen deities were regarded as ruling over. (2) founded . . seas, "bec. the waters existed before the dry land, this has been cast up out of them at God's word."*a* Ge. i. 9, 10.

*The earth is the Lord's* (v. 1).—I. Although the truth of God's providence is generally acknowledged in principle, it is generally departed from in practice. II. That all the children of God have, in successive ages, proclaimed and deeply felt the truth of the providence of God. III. What are the practical reflections which these words suggest? 1. They remind us what we are apt to forget; 2. We should be grateful for the mercies showered on

author,—David

*The Psalm of the Ascension. The removal of the ark to Kirjath-jearim to Mt. Zion may be the occasion of the writing.*

*a Dereserch.*

*b H. Cowell, M.A.*

"The Psalmist declines of course to enter on geological speculations,

this nation : 3. God can take away as well as give : 4. We are responsible for what is given to us : 5. They who dwell in the world belong to God. [b]

*On Psa. xxiii.*—This is an ode which for beauty of sentiment is not to be matched in the circuit of all literature. In its way down through three thousand years or more, this psalm has penetrated to the depths of millions of hearts : it has gladdened homes of destitution and discomfort ; it has whispered hope and joy amid tears to the utterly solitary and forsaken, whose only refuge was in heaven. Beyond all range of probable calculation, have these dozen lines imparted a power of endurance under suffering, and strength in feebleness, and have kept alive the flickering flame of religious feeling in hearts that were nigh to despair. [c]

**3—6.** (3) **hill of the Lord,** Zion in the days of the tabernacle ; Moriah in the days of the temple : but both only as fig. of God's eternal abode in heaven. (4) **clean,** from acts of sin. **pure,** or simple, sincere. Moral conditions are absolutely essential to all true worship. **vanity,** [a] or vain desires. Poss. with allusion to false gods, wh. are in Sc. regarded as vanity. (5) **blessing,** comp. Ge. xxxii. 29. xxxv. 9. **righteousness,** in O. T. sense of acceptation of inward and outward holiness. [b] (6) **this,** is the test of, see *v.* 4. **O Jacob,** or Jacob's God. Or it may mean that only those who thus seek God, are the true Jacob, or Israel.

*The soul's cry and the true response* (*vv.* 3—6).—I. The soul's cry. This state of fellowship with God is the great want of human souls. It is—1. A very elevated state : 2. A very holy state ; 3. A very desirable state. II. The true response. The answer indicates two things. 1. The way of reaching this state ; 2. The blessedness of reaching this state. [c]

**7—10.** (7) **lift,** *etc.*, a kind of chorus, to be sung alternately. It is appropriate to the occasion of bringing the ark to Mount Zion. [a] **gates,** of the citadel of Zion. **everlasting doors,** or gates of old, as being of a hoar antiquity. (8) **strong,** His attribute. **mighty,** its manifestation in actions. (9, 10) **hosts,** [b] or armies.

*The ascension of Christ* (*vv.* 7—10).—In considering these words we shall—I. Notice their literal reference. II. Their prophetic reference,—the ascension of Christ. 1. The title given to Him ; 2. The dignity and blessedness claimed for Him ; 3. The reception which is awaiting Him. [c]

*The King of glory* (*v.* 8).—Here unbelief frets and murmurs, and asks where is all the glory that is so much extolled? For discovering this, faith needs only look through that thin veil of flesh : and under that low disguise appears the Lord of glory, the King of kings, the Lord of hosts, strong and mighty : "The Lord mighty in battle ;" the heavens His throne, the earth His footstool, the light His garments, the clouds His chariots, the thunder His voice, His strength omnipotence, His riches all-sufficiency, His glory infinite, His retinue the hosts of heaven, and the excellent ones of the earth, on whom He bestows riches unsearchable, an inheritance incorruptible, banquets of everlasting joys, and preferments of immortal honour, making them kings and priests unto God. [d]

but describes natural phenomena, the earth raised above the seas, girt by the ocean, and resting apparently upon its waters." — *S.K. Com.*

See *J. Bowes*, 968 ; *J. B. Massillon*, xiii. 65.

*v.* 1. *T. Hunter*, i. 115.

*v.* 2. *Dr. T. Rennell*, 253.

*c Is. Taylor.*

*a* "It may be taken in its widest sense of all that the human heart puts in the place of God."—*Perowne.*

*b* "Poss. the term here betokens *beneficence* on the part of God, as in Ps. cxi. 3."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 3. *E. Bather*, i. 421 ; *J. R. Pitman*, 89.

*vv.* 3, 4. *Dr. F. Marks*, ii. 173.

*vv.* 3—5. *J. Cock*, 1 ; *Farquhar*, ii. 10.

*c Dr. D. Thomas.*

*a* 2 Sa. vii. 2 ; Ac. i. 9.

*b* Ho. xii. 5 ; Am. v. 13.

*c Expos. Outlines.* "Where do we find a sweeter voice of joy than in the Psalms of thanksgiving and praise? There you look into the heart of all the holy, as into a beautiful garden, as into heaven itself. What delicate, fragrant, and lovely flowers are there springing up of all manner of beautiful joyous thoughts, towards God and His goodness!"—*Luther.*

*d J. McLaurin* (1750).

## PSALM THE TWENTY-FIFTH.

anthor,—prob. David

*A prayer for protection and guidance. The first of the acrostic, or alphabetical Psalms.*

1–3. (1) unto thee, not to any idol-god, nor to any human deliverer. but to God, who alone can grant him that wh. shall satisfy his need.[a] lift, *etc.*, there may poss. be reference to Ps. xxiv. 4.[b] (2) ashamed, by having my hope in Thee disappointed. triumph over me, wh. they would do, if Div. help tarried. (3) let none, better, *none shall be.* wait on thee, Ps. xxvii. 14.[c]

*The nature of true prayer* (*v.* 1).—I. The realisation and recognition of the presence of God. II. The abstraction from the influences of the world; the consecration and concentration of all the energies of the man. IV. The results of such lifting up of the soul to God. 1. We shall be transported with the Divine nearness: 2. Transformed into the Divine likeness; 3. Translated into the Divine presence now and hereafter.[d]

*Learn for "teach."*—This is now perhaps a vulgarism, but in Ps. xxv. 4, we have in P. B., "Lead me forth in Thy truth, and learn me" [A. V. "teach"], and in cxix. 66 [P. B.], while in verse 71 it occurs in its ordinary signification. In Anglo-Saxon a leornan-man was both "teacher" and "learner," and in Old English to lere was to teach. "If thou conne eny lyf [*i.e.* instruction] of leche-craft lere hit me, my deore."—*Piers Ploughm.* vii. 211.

4–7. (4) thy ways, the trustful man desires to be wholly guided, and yields his will to God's. (5) truth,[a] or faithfulness, regarded as an attribute of God. on thee, Thee only. Thee altogether. (6) tender mercies,[b] Heb. *bowels.* ever of old, as Ge. viii. 1, ix. 15, xix. 29, etc. (7) sins . . youth, not merely sins committed in youth, but sins of passion and frailty characteris.ic of youth. transgressions, marked by wilfulness, such as belong to maturer age.

"*Lead me*," "*teach me*" (*v.* 5).—I. The twofold prayer. 1. Lead me, help me to walk according to Thy will; teach me the spirit in which I should walk. II. The manifold argument. 1. The Saviour has engaged to keep the saved; 2. The Saviour has promised to teach; 3. The Saviour has revealed His desire that the redeemed should recognise and celebrate His faithfulness; 4. He who has put our feet in the right way will surely guide our feet therein; 5. He who loves us enough to save us will surely answer our cry for guidance and keeping. III. The prevalent Pleader. 1. His character is shown by the prayer—humility, wisdom, faith, patience; 2. His behaviour: he waits and prays, he prays and waits.[c]

*Sins of my youth* (*v.* 7).—Old debts vex most. The delay of payment increases them by use upon use; and the return of them being unexpected, a person is least provided for them. Augustus wondered at a person sleeping quietly that was very much in debt, and sent for his pillow, saying, "Surely there is some strange virtue in it, that makes him rest so secure." My brethren, if our debt unto God's law be more than the whole creation can satisfy, what do any of us mean to rest secure with so vast a burden upon our consciences and account? Oh! take heed thou be not surprised and arrested with old debts.[d]

*a* Compare Ps. lxxiii. 24–26; He. xii. 2.

*b* "The fundamental distinction between the godly and ungodly men consists in the object to wh. their affections are directed."—*Spk. Com.*

*c* Is. xxvi. 8, xlix. 23.

*d F. W. Brown.*

*a* "His truth is the lasting and self-verifying fact of His revelation of grace."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* "'Tender mercies,' 'lovingkindnesses,' 'goodness.' How the soul dwells on these attributes of God, and cleaves to them when it is troubled with the sad recollection of the 'sins of its youth,' and its 'transgressions!'"—*Perowne.*

Ps. ciii. 17, cvi. 1, cvii. 1; Je. xxxiii. 11.

*c Stems and Twigs.*

*d E. Pledger* (1661).

8—11. (8) **upright**, a term suitable only to man is applied to God. "Acting according to His promise." **sinners**,[a] not while in their wilfulness, but when penitent and humble. Ref. however may be to "those who err fr. human infirmity." (9) **meek**, those poor, or humble in spirit; contrite.[b] (10) **covenant**, the national covenant, wh. represented the great human covenant. **testimonies**, or laws wh. are the conditions and terms of that covenant. (11) **mine iniquity**, in relation to the laws and covenant.[c]

*The way of the Lord* (*v.* 8).—I. It is the way of moral excellence. II. It is the way of experimental blessedness. 1. They experience the mercy of the Lord in their way; 2. They experience the truth of God in their way. III. The way of sin forgiven. Observe two things here. 1. An urgent need for pardon; 2. The sovereign reason for pardon. IV. The way of soul wealth. 1. Abundant; 2. Permanent: 3. Transmissible; 4. Free. V. The way of Divine friendship. VI. The way of ultimate deliverance. 1. Men are entangled in dangers; 2. True men will be delivered; 3. True men always keep their eyes on the Lord.[d]—*The penitent's supplication* (*v.* 11).—Here we have—I. The sinner's confession,—my iniquity is great. II. The sinner's prayer,—pardon my iniquity. III. The sinner's plea.—for Thy name's sake.

*Our need of mercy* (*v.* 11).—The greater our sins are, the greater need we have of mercy. No man flies his counsel because his cause is great and intricate, but plies him the more. The more dangerous diseases are, the more physicians are sought to. Some offenders are like Jairus's daughter, newly dead,—by consent to some unjustifiable act. Others, like the widow's son of Nain, carrying out to burial,—by acting unworthy things. Others, like Lazarus, four days dead in the grave, putrefying,—by living in sin, with the stone of custom upon them. Let none of these depair; Christ can raise all these, as He did those. Christ is good at an old wound,—all cures are alike to Him.[e]

12—14. (12) **what man**, or whosoever is the man. "What the Psalmist asks for himself is the common lot of the pious."[a] (13) **dwell at ease**, *Heb.* lodge in goodness.[b] **inherit**, *etc.*, fig. taken from the promise and possession of the land of Canaan.[c] (14) **secret**, secret counsel; privilege of close, friendly communion.[d] **will show**, better rend. "And his covenant to make them know it."[e]

*The blessedness of fearing the Lord* (*v.* 12).—The man who feareth the Lord is blessed—I. In the sacred knowledge of Christ's will, him shall He teach in the way that He shall choose. II. In the quiet peace of a good conscience, his soul shall dwell at ease. III. In the present comfort of a hopeful progeny, his seed shall inherit the earth.[f]

15—18. (15) **net**, frequent fig. for dangers by enemies.[a] (16) **desolate**, the isolated one, whom men treat as a stranger. (17) **are enlarged**, or do Thou enlarge.[b] (18) **look upon**, with idea of regarding graciously.

*The cry of the troubled* (*v.* 16).—David is a petitioner as well as sufferer, and these sorrows will never injure us that bring us near to God. Three things he prays for. I. Deliverance,—this we are called to desire consistently with resignation to the Divine will. II. Notice,—a kind look from God is desirable at any time, in any circumstances, but in affliction and pain it is like life

*a* Ro. v. 8; 1 Ti. i. 15.

*b* Matt. v. 5.

*c* "The lively sense of the greatness of sin, and the open confession of it, are the best pleas for forgiveness." —*Wordsworth.*

Je. xiv. 7.

*d Dr. D. Thomas.*

"Where do you find more profound, mournful, pathetic expressions of sorrow than the plaintive Psalms contain? There again you look into the heart of all the holy, but as into death, nay, as into the very pit of despair. How dark and gloomy is everything there, arising from all manner of melancholy apprehensions of God's displeasure!" —*Luther.*

*e W. Price* (1646).

*a Fausset.*

*b* "The word 'abide,' literally 'lodge,' indicates that the abode here, after all, is but a sojourning, our earthly home but a caravanseral."—*Spk. Com.* c Ex. xx. 12; Le. xxvi. 34; De. iv. 1. *d* Comp. Job xxix. 4; Jno. xiv. 23.

*e* "So as to reveal its deep, inner meaning to them."—*Kay.*

*f R. Mossom.*

*a* Ps. ix. 15, x. 9.

*b* "The original text undoubtedly was, the straits of my heart do Thou enlarge, and bring me out of my distresses." —*Delitzsch.*

*c W. Jay.*

from the dead. III. Pardon,—trials are apt to revive a sense of guilt.[c]

19—22. (19) consider, with a view to restraining. cruel hatred, or hatred of violence: proceeding altogether from malignity. (20) ashamed, *see v.* 2. (21) integrity, *etc.*, a sense of sincerity is quite consistent with a confession of sin.[a] (22) Israel, the personal prayer becomes intercessory, and includes the whole congregation.[b]

*Soul preservation* (*v.* 20).—I. Its twofold character. "keep" and "deliver." II. Its dreadful alternative. "Let me not be ashamed." III. Its effectual guarantee, "I put my trust in Thee."[c]

*Perfect integrity* (*v.* 21).—Among the Alps alone are found men rustic without being ferocious, civilised without being corrupted. Our peasants in England are not to be compared with them: there, living among their equals, they are contented, possess an elevated mind, are generous, and welcome strangers as brothers. The following trait is as characteristic as it is singular. Frantz went one evening to Gaspard, who was mowing his field. "My friend," said he, "the time is come to get up this hay: you know there is a dispute about the meadow, to whom it belongs, you or me; to decide the question I have assembled together the appointed judges at Salenche; so come with me to-morrow, and state your claims." "You see, Frantz," answered Gaspard, "that I have cut the grass: it is therefore absolutely necessary that I should get it up to-morrow: I cannot leave it." "And I cannot send away the judges, who have chosen the day themselves; besides, we must know to whom the meadow belongs before it is cleared." They debated some time. At length Gaspard said to Frantz, "Go to Salenche, tell the judges my reasons as well as your own, for claiming the meadow, and then I need not go myself." So it was agreed. Frantz pleaded both for and against himself, and, to the best of his power, gave in his own claims as well as those of Gaspard. When the judges had pronounced their opinion he returned to his friend, saying, "The meadow is thine: the sentence is in thy favour, and I wish you joy." Frantz and Gaspard ever afterwards remained friends.[d]

*b* "This last *v.* was perhaps added in order to adapt the Psalm to liturgical use. The name of God is here Elohim, whereas throughout the rest of the Psalm it is Jehovah."—*Perowne.*

"It may poss. be a pious ejaculation added during the captivity."—*Spk. Com.*

*c C. H. Spurgeon.*

*v.* 18. *S. Larington*, ii. 413.

*v.* 21. *Dr. Guyse*, ii. 323.

*d Paxton Hood.*

## *PSALM THE TWENTY-SIXTH.*

author—prob. David

*A Psalm of self-justification, suiting the period of the Absalomic rebellion.* See 2 Sa. xv. 6.

1—4. (1) judge me, vindicate my cause: do me justice. integrity, conscious sincerity of intention,[a] *see* Ps. xxv. 21. I have trusted, he could appeal to the maintenance of this trust. not slide, or *may I not totter.* (2) examine me, Ps. cxxxix. 1, 23. reins . . heart, "the reins are the seat of the emotions, the heart is the very centre of the life of the mind and soul."[b] By this fig. Dav. seeks a most minute and complete inspection. (3) walked, "term in Heb. implies long and active habits of obedience."[c] (4) vain persons, Ps. xxiv. 4. dissemblers, lit. *hidden ones.*[d]

*a* Ge. xx. 5.

*b Delitzsch.*

*c Spk. Com.*

*d* "Men in whom evil purposes are concealed under a mask of respectability."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*The manifestness of Divine benignity* (*v.* 3).—God's benignity—I. Is a fact ever before the eyes of man's investigating intellect. II. It is a fact ever before the eye of man's general consciousness. III. It is a fact ever before the eye of Biblical faith.[e]

*e Dr. D. Thomas.*

*Examination* (*v.* 2).—Take your souls to the glass of the law, and go from one precept to another; and when you have done

"The law con-

there, go to the Gospel. And be sure you do not deal slightly. And when you have well studied the number and quality of your sins, then consider the justice and holiness of the eternal God, which you shall understand by the same law and Gospel; but more especially shall ye know it by going to the cross of Christ; for we never know as we ought the evil of sin, and our misery thereby, until we know what He endured to make expiation for it. They that never knew themselves are most certainly without love to Christ.[f]

5—8. (5) not sit, Ps. i. 1. (6) wash mine hands, a figexpression of separating one's self from.[a] compass, *etc.*, see Ex. xxx. 17—21, word prob. means "near and habitual approach."[b] (7) publish, or strike in: adding to the ordinary worship his personal song of thankfulness. (8) habitation, the home, or refuge.[c] the place, strictly the mercy-seat.

*David's affection for the house of God* (*v.* 8).—I. The object of the Psalmist's affection, which affection was ardent, constant, practical. II. The reason of the Psalmist's affection. 1. Because of the Proprietor's residence there; 2. Because of the company He furnishes; 3. Because of the blessings it affords; 4. Because of the habits it induces.[d]

*Washing hands symbolical* (*v.* 6).—Outward washings as emblematical of inward purity in connection with Divine worship were taught under the Old Testament dispensation (Deut. xxi. 6—9); and either from tradition or from an inward consciousness of the preparation necessary in approaching the Deity, even pagan nations have adopted this practice. We read in Grecian history that those persons who were initiated into the mysteries of the Temple of Ceres and Proserpine, had, before they entered the mystic temple at the festival of secresy in honour of their gods, to wash their hands in holy water, and were exhorted by the priest to come to the ceremony with a pure heart. And among the Romans washing the hands was considered as a symbol of innocency: hence we read that Pilate washed his hands to clear his soul from the murder of Christ Jesus. In Hindoo temples there is a vessel filled with water at the entrance for the worshippers to wash their hands. Not unlike the Popish practice of dipping their fingers in holy water on entering their churches.

9—12. (9) gather not, make not my lot common with theirs.[a] bloody men, Ps. v. 6. (10) bribes, the sin of magistrates.[b] (11) redeem me, fr. the devices, and fr. the lot. of the wicked. (12) even place, on level ground. "He expresses the confidence that he is *safe*, and cannot be hemmed in."[c]

*Distinguishing mercy* (*v.* 9).—I. The import of the petition. It implies a belief—1. That the soul survives the body; 2. That in the future state the condition of all men will not be the same; 3. That the future condition of the wicked will be dreadful; 4. That none but God can deliver us from that dreadful condition; 5. That it is most desirable we should be delivered. II. The reason of the petition. 1. Because the finally impenitent constitute an assemblage of persons exclusively unholy; 2. Because all that is unholy within them shall be in uncontrolled operation; 3. Because they lie under the curse of God; 4. Because escape from their companionship involves admission to the companionship of the saints in glory.[d]

vinces and condemns sinners; the Gospel relieves and pardons them, justifies and saves them."—*Watts.*

*f C. Nesse* (1661).

*a* Matt. xxvii. 24.

*b* "I think that the whole passage is figurative and amounts to this, 'I would fain give myself to Thy service even as Thy priests do.'"—*Peroune.*

*c* Comp. Ps. xxiii. 6, xxvii. 4, lxiii. 2.

*d Theta*, in 400 Sks.

"The Psalms, the Canticles, the poetic books, are the singing groves, the tinkling rills, the pastures green [of the Bible]."—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

*v.* 6. *Dr. A. Monro*, 409; *Dr. R. Lucas*, ii. 66.

*vv.* 6, 7. *Bp. Medley*, 45.

*v.* 7. *J. Charlesworth*, iii. 195.

*v.* 8. *Dr. R. Newton*, 355; *Dr. H. Blair*, iv. 224; *J. Boudier*, 305; *Bp. Van Mildert*, i. 282; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 51.

*a* "Let not my soul and my life be knit in their *fate* with those of such men... The prayer is apparently against evil fortunes regarded as the punishment of sin."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* "The corruption of justice was then, and ever has been, the cancer of Oriental despotisms."—*Spk. Com.*

*c Peroune.*

*d G. Brooks.*

author,—prob. David

*This Ps. expresses unshaken confidence in the midst of dangers, and may be referred to the time of Absalom's rebellion.*

*a Spk. Com.*

In N. T. comp. Jno.i.7—9; 1 Jno. i. 5; Re. xxi. 23.

*b* "The accumulation of words is to be noticed, wherein he terms God not only his light, but his welfare, and the rock or strength of his life. For his meaning was, to set as it were his threefold shield against sundry terrors, as sufficient to ward them off."—*Calvin.*

*c* Job xix. 22.

*d The Study.*

*e Sunday at Home.*

*v.* 1. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 231; *T. Parker*, 170; *G. C. Percival*, ii. 18; *Dr. C. Wordsworth, Lenten Sers.*

*v.* 3. *Dr. H. Blair*, lii. 129; *Dr. T. Chalmers*, vi. 40.

*a* "Apparently with reference to the ordinances of the sanctuary, the worship as there conducted, but not to be confined merely to the external glory of the tabernacle."—*Perowne.*

*b W. Wheeler.*

## *PSALM THE TWENTY-SEVENTH.*

1—3. (1) my light, only passage in the O. T. in wh. the term "light" is expressly applied to the Lord.[a] But comp. a similar thought in Mic. vii. 8. salvation, or Saviour. strength, or stronghold, or bulwark.[b] (2) eat . . flesh, as if they were beasts of prey.[c] (3) in this, better, *in spite of this.*

*The Christian's boast* (*vv.* 1—6).—I. The one thing of which David here speaks. Abiding in the presence of God will give—1. Light; 2. Salvation; 3. Strength; 4. Beauty; 5. Joy. II. The condition of attaining this one thing: we must seek after it.[d]

*Death-bed of Sir D. Brewster.*—His family had now been summoned around him, and thenceforward, in the innermost circle of his love, his remaining hours were spent with unclouded intellect and in uncloaded peace. For the last day or two he was attended by his friend, Sir James Simpson, a man of kindred genius and of kindred Christian hopes. "The like of this I never saw," he said, as we met him coming fresh from the dying chamber. "There is Sir David resting like a little child on Jesus, and speaking as if in a few hours he will get all his problems solved by Him." For in that supreme hour of dawning immortality his past studies were all associated with the name and person of the Redeemer. "I shall see Jesus," he said; "and that will be grand. I shall see Him who made the worlds," with allusion to those wonderful verses in Hebrews which had formed the subject of the last sermon he ever heard, a few weeks before. Thus, tracing all to the Creator-Redeemer, he felt[e] no incongruity even in these hours in describing to Sir James Simpson, in a "fluent stream of well-chosen words," some beautiful phenomena in his favourite science. Reference was made to the privilege he had enjoyed in throwing light upon the "great and marvellous works of God." "Yes," he said, "I found them to be great and marvellous, and I felt them to be His." He had little pain but such as came from intense weakness. The light was with him all through the valley. "I have had the light for many years," he whispered slowly, and with emphasis; "and oh, how bright it is! I feel so safe, so satisfied." And so in childlike reliance and adoring love he gently fell asleep in Jesus on the evening of Monday, February 10th, 1868. On the Saturday following he was laid beside kindred dust.[e]

4—6. (4) dwell . . life, this is plainly the language of one who is exiled fr. his sanctuary privileges. beauty, or graciousness.[a] inquire, or meditate. (5) pavilion . . tabernacle, the tent erected on Mt. Zion to receive the ark. (6) will, *etc.*, the Psalmist confidently anticipates his restoration.

*The godly soul* (*v.* 5).—Let the text suggest, as it is gathered from the whole Psalm—I. The spiritual history of a godly soul. 1. God speaks to it: 2. The soul responds. II. The spiritual relations of a godly soul. 1. Pure grace; 2. Free access; 3. Exultant joy. III. The spiritual security of a godly soul. 1. God's attitude; 2. God's care.[b]

*Christ and His people.*—The world is not a vesselwhich is suffered to drift about without a pilot, mast, or sail; but one in which

an Almighty hand guides the helm. The human race is not an unbridled, ungoverned mass—but an immense flock, fed by an all-satisfying Shepherd. History is not a web of human will and blind chaos—but a work of art, for which He, who orders all things, twists the thread of all human doings and undertakings. And if it does not everywhere manifest itself as such a work of art, we must bear in mind that it is still only a fragment; and that our eyes are obscured, with regard to the ways of God. Wait till the Lord Almighty reaches the end of His great designs, and till eternity removes every veil, and sharpens the eye and the understanding. O how shall we then sink down in adoring astonishment before the feet of the Eternal, when we perceive how everything, even that which was the most opposed and inimical to His holy will, was obliged to submit,—become subservient to and even promote, under His all-powerful hand, the exalted plans of His rule and government! How rich the consolation which already springs forth from the consciousness that high above the tumults here below, the throne of the Ruler of the universe rests in eternal glory; and that all that takes place on the earth is guided as by leading-strings, the ends of which run together into His all-powerful hands. How genial and tranquillising the star which beams upon us from this heart-cheering truth! How boldly may we steer whilst fixing our eyes upon it, into the obscurity of another year, since all its events are already foreseen by providential wisdom! That which has lately occurred in neighbouring countries will as surely be compelled to serve the fulfilment of the Divine purposes, however far its consequences may extend, as it has been already most minutely weighed and proportioned. Whether peace still continue to favour us, or the torch of war be kindled; whether blessing pour down upon our country, or the scourge of deserved judgment smite us—all is already decided in the council of "the watchers." Nothing will occur to us in the course of the coming year by mere chance.[c]

*v.* 4. *J. Calvin, Op.* xv. 547; *R. Abbot*, 1; *Bp. Mossom*, 145; *R. Pococke*, 83; *D. Wilcox*, iii. 55; *A. Bully*, ii. 249; *J. Logan*, 17; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, i. 543; *H. Turner*, 65; *Dr. T. Chalmers*, viii. 252; *E. Bather*, iii. 310; *A. Roberts*, i. 216; *J. H. Newman*, iv. 259; *C. G. Davies*, 272; *Dr. G. E. Biber*, 1.

*vv.* 4, 5. *J. Horderm*, 153; *J. W. Cunningham*, ii. 354.

*v.* 5. *Dr. H. Blair*, i. 25; *J. Charlesworth*, iii. 169.

*c Krummacher.*

7—9. (7) **hear, O Lord,** the tone of the Ps. suddenly changes when the Psalmist thinks of his own sinfulness. **with my voice,** *i.e.* loudly. (8) **when,** *etc.*, lit. "My heart said to Thee, 'Seek ye My face;' Thy face, Lord, I will seek."[a] (9) **thou . . help,** or *be thou my help.*

*The answer of a gracious soul to the Divine call* (*v.* 8).—There will be a reply in a gracious heart to a gracious call. I. Consider the gracious call. 1. Seek My favour, approbation, friendship; 2. Seek by appointed means; 3. Especially in Jesus Christ. II. Consider the reply. 1. The call is general, but the reply is particular; 2. We have a warrant in the promises for seeking.[b]—*The Father's command and the child's obedience.*—I. The command: easy, and right, and good. Many things may be sought and not found; or if found, not benefit. This involves nearness to and favour of God. Binding upon every one. Has been often given, and is repeated now. II. The obedience. Prompt, "when," no delay. True, "my heart," not in words only. Heart moves the feet, hands, thoughts, etc. Firm "will," an unalterable resolution, in the face of many difficulties. Such obedience best for the child, and most pleasing to the father. Such obedience our heavenly Father expects (Heb. xii. 9). Application:—God calls now: how many will from their hearts begin now to seek Him? (Ps. xc. 14; Prov. viii. 17.)[c]

*a* Ps. xxiv. 6.

*b R. Cecil, M.A.*

[c] How beautiful and how varied are the forms of prayer and thanksgiving in the Book of Psalms! They appear as the outpourings of a grateful heart before God for the glories of His creation, for succour in the hour of danger, for deliverance from affliction, for national privileges, and for anticipated salvation. —*Sedgwick.*

*c Hive.*

The author of *The Night*

*Thoughts* was one of the chaplains of King George II. One Sunday, when preaching in his turn at St. James's, he found his audience, including the king, very inattentive. After striving to the utmost to gain their attention, his pity for their folly got the better of him; he sat back in the pulpit, and burst into a flood of tears.
*d St. Augustine.*

*a* "Though my condition be helpless and friendless as that of a child deserted of his parents, there is One who watches over me, and will take me to His bosom."—*Perowne.*
*b J. J. Cori, M.A.* "Day. was sometimes compelled to leave his parents to the care of others (1 Sa. xxii. 3), but we know nothing of his parents forsaking him."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*a* "Did I not believe, were not confidence preserved to me, . . . then I had suddenly perished."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* Ps. xxxvii. 34, xl. 1, cxxx. 6.

*c R. Berry.*

v. 12. *H. B. Wilson*, 19; *J. R. Pitman*, ii. 604.

v. 13. *D. Wilcox*, ii. 1; *W. Leighton-house*, 423; *J. H. Stewart*, 352.

v. 14. *G. J. Zollikoffer*, i. 165.

*The hidings of God's face* (*v.* 9).—Behold, great Master of the house, a needy beggar knocking at the door of Thy mercy: O let him, by his own experience, prove the truth of that gracious promise, "Knock, and it shall be opened unto you." For what is knocking, if the inward groan, the sounding of my bowels, the vehement desires, the doleful lamentations, the moving tears, and importunate cries, with which my heart now seeks Thee, do not deserve that name? Nor can any of these most inward griefs be lost upon an all-seeing God: for Thou observest my most secret thoughts, and my heaviness is not hid from Thee. Call up Thy bowels, Thy tender and unspeakable affection, of which I have already had so many instances; let these commiserate my present distress, and work out for me a mighty deliverance; that I may be conducted safe to Thee, my God, and see the riches of Thy kingdom, and the beauties of Thy glorious presence, and sing praises incessantly to Thy name.[d]

10. when, better rend. *though*. Even should this happen,[a] take me up, into His love and care.

*Human instability and Divine unchangeableness* (*v.* 10).—I. Man's mind and will are mutable, but God's grace and mercy cannot change. II. Man is feeble and impotent, but God is able at all times to succour His people. III. Man is mortal, but God is an ever-living friend.[b]

*A good life.*—"No doubt," said the late Rev. J. Brown, of Haddington, "I have met with trials as well as others; yet so kind has God been to me, that I think, if He were to give me as many years as I have already lived in this world, I should not desire one single circumstance in my lot changed, except that I wish I had less sin. It might be written on my coffin, 'Here lies one of the cares of Providence, who early wanted both father and mother, and yet never missed them.'"

11—14. (11) plain path, Ps. xxvi. 12. enemies, lit. *watchers for my fall*. (12) breathe out, Ac. ix. 1, "A forcible image, not uncommon in classic writers." (13) Omit the words, "I had fainted." The verse seems to begin with a sigh; the incomplete sentence indicating strong emotion.[a] (14) wait on the Lord, the attitude of soul constantly commended in the Ps.[b]

*Wait on the Lord* (*v.* 14).—I. Waiting is vastly advantageous. 1. We must know when to wait: 2. And how to wait; 3. It is disciplinary; 4. It is testing. II. Waiting on God is frequently and variously enforced in the Bible. 1. By precept and example; 2. It is the Christian's greatest privilege. III. The true nature and method of waiting on God are clearly described in the Bible. 1. Not simply to wait in the sanctuary; 2. Or on the ministry; 3. Or in services on the Sabbath; 4. But every day, with heedfulness and strong desire. IV. The benefits of waiting upon God are definitely set forth in the Bible. 1. Worldly prosperity; 2. Strength of heart; 3. Deliverances of all needful kinds; 4. All good things.[c]

*Need of Divine teaching* (*v.* 11).—Varro, a Roman writer of the first century B.C., states, that in his day, he had been at the pains to collect the various opinions on the question, "What is the true object of human life?" in other words, "What is the supreme good?" He had reckoned up as many as three hundred and twenty different answers! How needful is Divine revelation;

and how essential to those who are starting in life that a heavenly Guide should teach them the true end and purpose of earthly existence![d]

*d W. H. Groser.*

## PSALM THE TWENTY-EIGHTH.

author,—prob. David

*A Psalm in which the help of God is sought against the public foe. The historical connection cannot be fixed.*

1—5. (1) silent to me, Heb. *from me*. Be not *dumb* to me, do not *turn away* from me. pit, *Sheol*, the grave. (2) lift . . hands, the most usual attitude in prayer.[a] oracle, or sanctuary: the holy of holies. (3) draw, *etc.*, as Ps. xxvi. 9. speak peace, comp. *dissemblers*, Ps. xxvi. 4. (4) give them, the godly man may seek just punishments on his foes, as well as deliverance for himself. (5) regard . . Lord, the ground on wh. we may seek their punishment is not injury done to *ourselves*, but dishonour brought on *God*. destroy, lit. *shatter*.

*A society strongly deprecated* (*v.* 3).—I. The character of ungodly society. 1. They are apostates; 2. Rebels; 3. Hypocrites. II. The attractiveness of ungodly society. This consists—1. In its numerical force; 2. Its social resources. III. The banefulness of ungodly society. 1. It is detrimental to the highest interests of human nature: 2. It is doomed to ruin.[b]

*After* (*v.* 4).—"Recompense them after the work of their hands" (Prayer-Book Version): "give them after the work of their hands" (Bible Version), the "after" being in the Hebrew represented by a particle which is equivalent to "according to." Ps. xc. 15: "Comfort us again now after the time that Thou hast plagued us" (Prayer-Book): in Bible Version, "according to the days wherein," where the Hebrew particle is the same. In the Litany, "O Lord, deal not with us after our sins, neither reward us after our iniquities." So in *Piers Plowman*, passus iii. 316:—

> "But *after* the dede that is don one dome shall rewarde,
> Mercy or no mercy as treuthe wil acorde."

The passage quoted seems to explain how after comes to be used in this sense, for the judgment which tries a deed must follow it in point of time, as well as be pronounced in accordance with it.

*a* Ex. ix. 29; Ps. cxli. 2; La. ii. 29.

*b Dr. D. Thomas.* "Happy is the man to whom these treasures are familiar, who has imbibed their spirit and made their sentiments his own. To such a man Omnipotence has no terror; the Almighty is his guardian; the most high God his protector and his shield."—*Bishop Jebb.*

"Happyoccasions oft by self-mistrust are forfeited; but infamy doth kill."—*W. Wordsworth.*

6—9. (6) hath heard, in the past; therefore new prayers may be offered with confidence. (7) trusted, so he could rejoice as if his prayer had actually been answered. (8) saving strength, fortress of protection. (9) feed them, as a shepherd does his flock. lift them, as a shepherd would the weary lambs.[a]

*The songs of heaven* (*v.* 7).—There are three especial occasions wherein the universe has resounded with the most noble praise. I. The song of creation. II. The song of redemption. III. The song of glorification.[b]

*Honouring God* (*v.* 7).—He that knoweth God aright will honour Him by trusting of Him; he that honours Him by trusting Him, will honour Him by praying; and he that honours Him by prayer, shall honour Him by praise; he that honours Him by praises here, shall perfect His praises in heaven. This trading with God is the richest trade in the world. When we return praises to Him. He returns new favours to us; and so an everlasting, ever-increasing intercourse betwixt God and the soul is maintained.[c]

*a* Is. xl. 11, xlvi. 3, lxiii. 9.

*b C. Bryan, M.A.* "We should not sadden the harmless mirth of others by suffering our own melancholy to be seen; and this species of exertion is, like virtue, its own reward; for the good spirits which are at first simulated become at length real." — *Thomas Scott.*

*c R. Gibbs* (1635).

## PSALM THE TWENTY-NINTH.

anthor,—David

*A Psalm suggested by a great thunderstorm.*

The Sept. indicates that this Ps. was connected with the feast of Pentecost, wh. was the memorial of giving of law on Sinai.

1, 2. (1) give, or *ascribe*; yield (Calvin). mighty, Heb. *sons of the mighty*: or angels.[a] It seems, however, more simple to refer it to the mighty ones of earth, whose greatness can in no sense compare with God's. strength, *i.e.* acknowledge that strength is with Him. (2) beauty of holiness, as priests in holy vestments.[b]

*Man in the thunderstorm.*—In this Psalm we are called upon—I. To worship the Almighty in a thunderstorm. 1. Worship is a service for the greatest: 2. A service of surrender: 3. Of obligation: 4. Of urgency: 5. Of beauty. Man is here called upon to—II. Hearken to the Almighty in a thunderstorm. The storm is ascribed to God, which is—1. Philosophical; 2. Scriptural; 3. Religious. III. To trust the Almighty in a thunderstorm.[c]

*Profane swearing.*—In the year 1796, when the ship *Duff* was preparing to take out the missionaries from the London Missionary Society, Mr. Cox, one of the directors, was one day walking in the street, where he was met by a very fine-looking boy, about fourteen years of age, who, stopping him, said, "Pray, sir, have not you some management in the ship that is going out with the missionaries?" "Yes, I have, my young man," said Mr. Cox. "I should like very much, sir, to go out with her as a cabin-boy." "Would you?" said Mr. Cox; "have you any parents?" "I have a mother," said the boy, "but no father." "And is your mother willing you should go?" "Oh yes, sir, very willing." Mr. Cox then desired the boy to call at his house, and to bring his mother along with him, that she might speak for herself. At the time appointed, the boy and his mother came, and she having declared her willingness that her son should go, the matter was accordingly settled. In the course of the conversation, a gentleman who was present, in order to try the boy, said to him, "So you wish to go to sea?" "Yes, sir, in the missionary ship." "And you can swear a good round hand, I suppose?" Shocked at the very idea of such a thing, the ingenuous little fellow burst into tears, and exclaimed, "If I thought there would be swearing aboard at all, I would not go."[d]

3—6. (3) voice, *etc.*, the thunder heard at first muttering in the distance. the waters, those of the firmament.[a] (4) powerful, expressing the feeling produced as the storm comes nearer. The Heb. expression "in might;" "in majesty;" is more vigorous. (5) breaketh the cedars, the effect of the lightning, or of the wind.[b] (6) skip, a very strong poetical figure of the waving of mountain forests before the wind. Sirion, the Sidonian name for Hermon. unicorn, Nu. xxiii. 22.

*The voice of the Lord* (*v.* 4).—I. Let us notice the modes in which God speaks, or makes communications to men. He speaks—1. In the structure and arrangements of material nature: 2. In the dispensations and the government of Providence; 3. In the messages of revealed truth. II. The attributes by which these communications are prominently distinguished. 1. Consider the glory of His nature from which the communications come; 2. The nature and contents of the communications themselves; 3. The issues in which neglect of or attention to these

a Ps. lxxxix. 6.

b 2 Chron. xx. 21; Ps. cx. 3.

"The priests and Levites in Jehovah's sanctuary on earth attired themselves, on special occasions, in suitable vestments to do Him service; so the angels are bidden to make a similar preparation."—*Spk. Com.*

c *Dr. Thomas.*

v. 2. *Bp. T. Wilson*, ii. 35; *Bp. Jebb, Prac. Theo.* i. 40; *Theodore Parker*, 128.

d *Whitecross.*

a Ge. i. 6, 7; Ps. civ. 3.

"The expression may pass, refer to the Mediterranean Sea, fr. which the storm comes up."—*J. D. Michaelis.*

b "The ancient expositors remind us that the breaking of the cedar trees by the wind is a figure of the laying low of the lofty and proud things of this world, by the rushing mighty

communications is to emanate. III. The tribute which these communications, made by God to man, imperatively require. 1. Faith is required : 2. Also gratitude : 3. And prayer.[c]

*Divine interposition* (v. 4).—At the battle of Solferino a dreadful storm burst upon the contending hosts. Black clouds gathered, red lightnings flashed, loud thunder roared, fierce winds blew, heavy rain fell, and fire mingled with hail ran along the ground, rebuking the murderous violence of man, and staying their slaughterous strife. Like this awful thunderstorm, a terrible tempest of calamity and woe, dark with the power of God, beats upon sinners, denouncing their madness and making them stand in awe of their Maker.

7—11. (7) **divideth**, cleaveth, "sendeth out forked lightning-shafts."[a] "Parts the blaze of the lightning, so as to give it the forked appearance." (8) **Kadesh**, Ge. xiv. 7 : Nu. xiii. 26 ; N.W. of the wilderness of Paran ; reference to this district indicates the course of the storm as fr. N. to S. (9) **hinds to calve**, more correctly, *maketh the trees to shake*.[b] It may, however, refer to the fright of the animals.[c] **temple**, of heaven and earth. **every one**, *lit.* all of it. (10) **upon**, or over, so as to control it. **flood**, vast deluge of rain accompanying the storm. (11) **with peace**, in the midst of, and after, storm.[d]

*The Christian's peace* (v. 11).—Inquire—I. What is the nature of the blessing the communication of which is assured? 1. Composure of mind arising from sense of reconciliation with God ; 2. Arising also from practical influence and operation of religion on the passions. II. What are the considerations by which this blessing may be most fully exhibited in its surpassing value? 1. It exalts and dignifies its possessor ; 2. It is an antidote and support in sorrow ; 3. Of the same nature as the peace of the future, and a pledge of it. III. What are the impressions which the contemplation of this blessing in its nature and surpassing value must legitimately produce? 1. The cultivation of gratitude and devotion; 2. Those who have it not should desire to possess it.[e]

*The favour of God* (v. 5).—God's favour is unmixed, pure, and perfect. There are no dregs in this cup : it is "a pure river of water of life." clear as crystal. God's favour is effectual : it can cure the soul of all its fears and sad thoughts, and scatter all clouds. God's favour always ends well ; it begins in good-will, it ends in good-will ; it begins in benevolence, it ends in complacency ; it begins in grace, and ends in glory ; it is so far from ceasing, that it is increasing : it is like Solomon's sun. that shines brighter to the perfect day of glory : like Ezekiel's waters, that grow deeper till the soul arrive at the unfathomable depth of eternal felicity.[f]—*The hinds to calve.*—It seems to be generally admitted that the hind brings forth her young with great difficulty ; and so much appears to be suggested in the third verse of the same chapter : "They bow themselves, they bring forth their young ones, they cast out their sorrows." But if Pliny and other natural historians are worthy of credit. Divine providence has been graciously pleased to provide certain herbs, which greatly facilitate the birth : and by an unerring instinct, He directs the hind to feed upon them when the time of gestation draws towards a close. Whatever be in this assertion, we know from higher authority, that Providence does promote the parturition of the

wind of the Holy Spirit."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 4. *J. H. Newman, Justification*, 66.

*c J. Parsons.*

"For they can conquer who believe they can."—*Virgil.*

*a* "The vivid, zigzag, serpent-like, character of the forked-lightning flash is given in a few words."—*Perowne.*

*b Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* "During thunderstorms the antelopes flee in consternation, and the poor Bechuanas start off the morning following such a storm in quest of the young which have been cast off through horror." — *Moffat's South Africa.*

*d* "The Psalm begins with a *Gloria in excelsis*, and ends with a *Pax in terris*."—*Delitzsch.*

*e T. Parsons.*

v. 10. *Bp. T. Wilson*, ii. 69 ; *Abp. Secker*, viii. 207.

v. 11. *J. Howe*, ii. 493 ; *T. Rogers*, ii. 223 ; *E. Cooper*, i. 292.

*f O. Heywood* (1668).

"Many men affect to despise fear, and, in preaching, resent any appeal to it ; but not to fear where there is occasion is as great a weakness as to fear unduly, without reason. God planted fear in the soul as truly as He

planted hope or courage. Fear is a kind of bell, or gong, which rings the mind into quick life and avoidance upon the approach of danger: it is the soul's signal for rallying."—*Beecher.*
*g Paxton.*

hind by awakening her fears and agitating her frame by the rolling thunder: "The voice of Jehovah (a common Hebrew phrase, denoting thunder) maketh the hinds to calve." Nor ought we to wonder that so timorous a creature as the hind should be so much affected by that awfully imposing sound, when some of the proudest men that ever existed have been made to tremble. Augustus, the Roman emperor, according to Suetonius, was so terrified when it thundered, that he wrapped a sealskin round his body, with a view of defending it from the lightning, and concealed himself in some secret corner till the tempest ceased. The tyrant Caligula, who sometimes affected to threaten Jupiter himself, covered his head, or hid himself under a bed; and Horace confesses he was reclaimed from atheism by the terror of thunder and lightning.*g*

## *PSALM THE THIRTIETH.*

**author,—David**

*Composed on recovery from dangerous sickness, or deadly peril.*

Entitled, *a song at the dedication of the house*, prob. meaning Dav.'s palace.

1—3. (1) **extol**, or eulogise, elevate by praise.*a* **lifted me up**, as out of a well, or pit; fr. the depths of my suffering.*b* (2) **healed me**, this term suggests sickness, but it may be used generally. (3) **grave**, *Sheol*, abode of spirits. **kept me alive**, through sickness, or danger. **should not**, *etc.*, or *from those that*, etc.*c*

*a* Fr. Lat. *ex*, out of; *tollere*, to lift, take up, or raise.
*b* 2 Sa. vii. 1.
*c* "In this case the meaning would be, that while others are perishing, God has preserved the psalmist's life."—*Spk. Com.*
On whole Ps.—*St. Basil, Op.* i. p. 1; *J. B. Massillon*, xiii. 171; *Dr. S. Chandler, Life of David*, ii. 8.
*d Chandler.*

*Note on title of this Ps.*—It was common, when any person had finished a house, and entered into it, to celebrate it with great rejoicing, and keep a festival, to which his friends were invited, and to perform some religious ceremonies, to secure the protection of heaven. Thus when the second temple was finished, the priests and Levites, and the rest of the captivity, kept the dedication of the house of God with joy, and offered numerous sacrifices (Ezra vi. 16). We read in the New Testament of the feast of the dedication, appointed by Judas Maccabæus in memory of the purification and restoration of the temple of Jerusalem, after it had been defiled and laid in ruins by Antiochus Epiphanes; and celebrated annually, to the time of its destruction by Titus, by solemn sacrifices, music, songs, and hymns to the praise of God; and feasts, and everything that could give the people pleasure, for eight days successively (Josephus). This was customary even among private persons. The Romans also dedicated their temples and their theatres. So also they acted with respect to their statues, palaces, and houses.*d*

4—6. (4) **at .. holiness**,*a* lit. *to the memorial*, the sacred title by which Israel remembers God: *see* Ex. iii. 15. (5) **moment**, "relatively, the longest experience of Divine anger by the pious is momentary." **favour**, *etc.*, read, His favour is lifelong, or a lifetime.*b* **for a night**, *Heb.* in the evening.*c* **joy**, or singing. (6) **never be moved**, so I needed the affliction to cure me of my presumption.*d*

*a* Ps. xcvii. 12, cxxxv. 13; Is. xxvi. 8; Hos. xii. 5.
*b* "The beauty of the antithesis is lost in the A. V. The Heb. lit. is, 'For (there is) a moment in His anger, life in His favour.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*
*c Lit.*, "In the eventide weeping takes up its abode, but at

*Life in God's favour* (*v.* 5).—I. What is God's favour? 1. His goodness in the ordinary course of providence: 2. Signal acts of discriminating providence: 3. Special fruits of His distinguishing grace; 4. Manifestations of His favour to the soul. II. How is this said to be life? 1. It is the cause of life; 2. It is the object of life; 3. The rule of life; 4. The end of life. III. To whom is God's favour life? 1. To young converts; 2. Returning backsliders; 3. In the time of affliction; 4. To dying persons.

IV. The nature of this life. A life of justification, sanctification, covenant supplies and glory. V. What a fearful case are they in who have not God's favour.[c]—*Sorrow succeeded by joy* (*v.* 5).—Notice some of those occasions of weeping which may be reasonably expected to terminate in joy. I. The tears that flow from convictions of sin and penitential sorrow. II. The grief that arises from conscious backsliding, or the upbraidings of a tender conscience. III. A season of enjoyment frequently follows one of spiritual desertion. IV. Temporal afflictions are an occasion of transitory sorrow to the people of God.[f]

*It will not do* (*v.* 6).—Mr. Jeremiah Burroughs, a pious minister, mentions the case of a rich man, who, when he lay on his sick-bed, called for his bags of money; and having laid a bag of gold to his heart, after a little he bade them take it away, saying, "It will not do! It will not do!"—*Preparation for death.*—When you lie down at night compose your spirits, as if you were not to awake till the heavens be no more. And when you awake in the morning consider that new day as your last, and live accordingly. Surely that night cometh of which you will never see the morning, or that morning of which you will never see the night; but which of your mornings or nights will be such you know not. Let the mantle of worldly enjoyments hang loose about you, that it may be easily dropped when death comes to carry you into another world. When the corn is forsaking the ground it is ready for the sickle; when the fruit is ripe it falls off the tree easily. So when a Christian's heart is truly weaned from the world, he is prepared for death, and it will be the more easy for him. A heart disengaged from the world is a heavenly one, and then we are ready for heaven when our heart is there before us.[g]

7–12. (7) **mountain**, Mount Zion,[a] fig. of David himself. **hide thy face**, comp. Ps. xxii. 24, xxvii. 9.[b] **troubled**, a strong word, indic. utmost dismay. (8, 9) **profit**, gain to God. **in my blood**, or violent death. The living only can praise Him. **dust**, the body returned to its dust.[c] (10) **mercy**, bec. affliction reminds of sin. (11) **hast turned**, the thankful joy of one whose prayer is answered. **dancing**, the expression of a bright rejoicing heart.[d] (12) **my glory**, Ps. xvi. 9.

*Dust to dust.*—My life is a frail life; a corruptible life; a life which the more it increaseth the more it decreaseth: the farther it goeth the nearer it cometh to death. A deceitful life, and like a shadow, full of the snares of death: now I rejoice, now I languish, now I flourish, now infirm, now I live, and straight I die; now I seem happy, always miserable; now I laugh, now I weep; thus all things are subject to mutability, that nothing continueth an hour in one estate: oh, joy above joy, exceeding all joy, without which there is no joy, when shall I enter into thee, that I may see my God that dwelleth in thee?

So live that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves
To that mysterious realm, where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry slave at night,
Scourged, to his dungeon; but sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.[e]

morn (there is) a shout of joy."

[d] "The word rendered 'prosperity' includes outward peace and success, such as led to Dav.'s special fault in numbering the people, and an inward feeling of self-complacency and careless ease."—*Spk. Com.*

[e] *O. Heywood* (1678).

[f] *S. Summers.* "Rabbi Eliezer said, 'Turn to God one day before your death.' His disciples said, 'How can a man know the day of his death?' He answered them, 'Therefore you should turn to God to-day. Perhaps you may die to-morrow; thus every day will be employed in returning.'"—*J. Whitecross.*

[g] *Barton.*

[a] 2 Sa. v. 7–10.

[b] See also De. xxxi. 17; Ps. civ. 29.

[c] The truth seems to be, that whilst *the faith* of the O. T. saints *in God* was strong and childlike, their *hope of immortality* was at best but dim and wavering, brightening perhaps for a moment when the heart was rejoicing in God as its portion, and then again almost dying away."—*Perowne.*

[d] *S. Augustine.*

[e] *W. C. Bryant.*

author,—David (prob.)

*A prayer offered in time of grievous affliction.*

Dedicated to the chief musician or precentor.

*a* Ps. xxv. 2.

*b* "This is the illogical language of intense feeling." —*Jennings and Lowe.* Lu. xxiii. 46. "Thence the prayer passed into the mouth of the first martyr, S. Stephen, at Jerusalem, Ac. vii. 59, and of S. Polycarp, at Smyrna, and into the hearts of thousands of Christians of every age, in their dying hour. 1 Pe. iv. 19."—*Wordsworth.* "The body being only the covering of the soul, at its dissolution we shall discover the secrets of nature — the darkness shall be dispelled, and our souls irradiated with light and glory; a glory without a shadow, a glory that shall surround us; and from whence we shall look down, and see day and night beneath us; and as now we cannot lift up our eyes towards the sun without dazzling, what shall we do when we behold the Divine light in its illustrious original?"—*Seneca.*

*c* R. Cecil, M.A. See *J. B. Massillon*, xiii. 190.

vv. 4, 5. *D. Wilcox*, i. 1.

v. 5. *G. Sutton*, 249; *S. Lavington*, ii. 40; *C. Bradley*, i. 47.

## *PSALM THE THIRTY-FIRST.*

1—6. (1) ashamed, by the failure of my trust in Thee, and by the success of mine enemies.[a] in thy righteousness, in vindication and illustration of Thy righteous ways of dealing with Thy servants. (2) strong rock, or like a hill-fort unto me. (3) art my rock, then prove Thyself to be what Thou art,[b] (3) name's sake, as my rock, and my shepherd, defend, lead, and guide. (4) net, either hunting of Saul, or devices of Abithophel are referred to. (5) into, *etc.*, words sanctified by our Lord's use of them.[c]

*Prayer for Divine guidance* (v. 3).—Consider the petition itself. It implies—I. That he feels his need of being led; 2. A persuasion of the willingness of God to lead; 3. Faith. II. The methods by which God leads. 1. By His providence; 2. By His Word; 3. By His Spirit. III. The encouragements thus to pray.

*American minister.*—An American minister, in the seventeenth century, when preaching from the words, ver. 5, remarked that he knew not how to describe the state of mind needful in this glorious transaction, better than by quoting the language of an eminent old servant of Christ, whose death-bed he had recently attended. "Sir, I am every day expecting my death; but I desire to die like the thief, crying to the crucified Jesus for mercy. I am nothing, I have nothing, I can do nothing, except what is unworthy; my eye, and hope, and faith, is to Christ on His cross. I bring an unworthiness like that of the poor dying thief unto Him, and have no more to plead than he. Like the poor thief crucified with Him, I am waiting to be received, by the infinite grace of my Lord, into His kingdom. And pray tell me, did not aged Paul mean something of this, when he said, 'I am crucified with Christ'!"—*Self-deception.*—Two gentlemen were fellow passengers in a vessel bound to a distant port. One was in vigorous health, and the other emaciated with disease, and manifesting premonitory symptons of a speedy dissolution. He was young and intelligent, but had not made what he knew to be the necessary preparation for the event which was rapidly approaching. His fellow passenger, as they were drawing near the port whither they were bound, advised him to consult an eminent physican who resided there. "No," he replied, "I shall not consult him." He was asked, "Why?" To which he answered, "It is not because I do not entertain the highest opinion of his skill, but he will honestly tell me that my disease is incurable, that I must die; and I do not wish to receive the announcement from such a source." It is just so with the multitudes who know that they must die, and that they are totally unprepared for the event. They are afraid to consult the great Physican, lest they should be told the worst of their own case. In opposition to their better judgment, they endeavour to hide from their eyes the doom which awaits them. Their deception is voluntary; it is of their own choosing. They wish it to be so, and therefore do they avoid the means of detecting and exposing it.

6—8. (6) them that regard, the worshippers of. lying vanities, vain illusions; false gods which cannot help their

worshippers.[a] (7) known,[b] with the added sense of *approving*, which is usual in Scripture. (8) shut, *etc.*, deliver over to. "A truly Davidic expression."[c] large room, Ps. xviii. 19.

*The Christian's phylactery* (*v.* 6).—I desire to set before you—I. The Psalmist's act, "into Thy hands I commend my spirit." II. The plea he urges in thus commending his spirit to God, "For Thou hast redeemed me." III. The encouragement he feels from a consideration of God's fidelity, "Thou God of truth."[d]

*The fulness of the Divine mercy.*—"Oh! blessed be God that I was born," said a holy man when dying. "I have a father and a mother, and ten brethren and sisters in heaven, and I shall be the eleventh. Oh, blessed be the day that I was ever born! Oh, that I were where He is! And yet, were God to withdraw from me, I should be weak as water. All that I enjoy, though it be miracle on miracle, would not support me without fresh supplies from God. The thing I rejoice in is this, that God is altogether full; and that in the Mediator, Christ Jesus, is all the fulness of the Godhead, and it will never run out. If there be such a glory in Christ's conduct towards me now, what will it be to see the Lamb in the midst of the throne? My peace hath been like a river. Blessed be God that I was ever born."[e]

*The hour of death.*—

Oh! beautiful beyond depicting words
To paint the hour that wafts a soul to heaven!
The world grows dim, the scenes of time depart,
The hour of peace, the walk of social joy,
The mild companion, and the deep-souled friend,
The loved and lovely—see his face no more.
The mingling spell of sun, of sea and air,
Is broken: voice and gaze, and smiles that speak
Must perish; parents take their hushed adieu;
A wife, a child, a daughter half divine,
Or son that never drew a father's tear—
Approach him, and his dying tones receive
Like God's own language! 'tis an hour of woe,
Yet terrorless, when revelations flow
From faith immortal; view that pale-worn brow,
It gleams with glory!—in his eyes there dawns
A dazzling earnest of unuttered joy.
Each pang subdued, his longing soul respires
The gales of glorified eternity;
And round him, hues ethereal, harps of light,
And lineaments of earthless beauty throng,
As, winged on melody, the saint departs,
While heaven in miniature before him shines.

**9—13.** (9) eye . . belly, render as in Liturgy, *myself, my soul and body.* My whole person. (10) grief, anguish. sighing, the expression of inward distress. mine iniquity, from this expression we may presume that the Psalm was written after the king's great crime. consumed,[a] comp. Ps. xxxii. 3, 4. (11) reproach, *etc.*, "The reproach originated with his enemies, but was extended to, and taken up by, his neighbours; so that his acquaintance, those who ought to have known him best, became terrified."[b] (12) broken vessel, the type of fragility and worthlessness. (13) slander, calumny.[c]

*a* De. xxxii. 21; Jer. ii. 5, viii. 19, v. 22; Jonah ii. 3.

*b* "Thou hast taken cognisance of the distresses of my soul." — *Hupfeld and Delitzsch.*

*c* 1 Sa. xxiii. 11.

*d H. Greeves.*

*v.* 6. *J. R. Pitman*, 105.

*v.* 7. *C. Hawtrey*, 233.

"What if the leaves were to fall a-weeping, and say, 'It will be so painful for us to be pulled from our stalks when autumn comes.' Foolish fear! summer goes, and autumn succeeds. The glory of death is upon the leaves; and the gentlest breeze that blows takes them softly and silently from the bough, and they float slowly down like fiery sparks upon the moss. It is hard to die when the time is not ripe. When it is, it will be easy. We need not die while we are living."—*Beecher.*

Sorrow's best antidote is employment.

*e T. Halyburton.*

*a* Job xx. 11.

*b Spk. Com.*

"The number of opponents that Dav. had, at length made him a reproach even in the eyes of the better disposed of his people, as being a revolter and

usurper." — *Delitzsch.*

*c* All these expressions are singularly appropriate, as describing the state of things in connection with the Absalomic revolt.

*d Dr. Thomas.*

r. 10. *H. T. C. Blake*, 119.

r. 11. *S. Clarke*, 241.

"My joy is death! Death, at whose name I oft have been afear'd, because I wish'd this world's eternity!" — *Shakespeare.*

*a* "Mighty strength of faith, when a man, conscious of his own sinfulness, and with a world in arms against him, yea, forsaken of his own friends, can still turn to God, and say, Thou art my God."—*Perowne.*

*b C. Simeon, M.A.*

r. 15. *Dr. T. Amory*, 329; *Dr. H. Blair*, iv. 43.

r. 16. *Dr. E. B. Pusey*, ii. 21; *A. B. Evans*, 246.

"Oh! it is hard to take to heart the lesson that such deaths will teach: but let no man reject it, for it is one that all must learn, and is a mighty, universal truth. When Death strikes down the innocent and young, for every fragile form from which he lets the panting spirit free, a hundred virtues rise, in shapes of Mercy,

*Buried alive* (*r.* 12).—Man may be said to be buried alive—I. In an unfortunate sense. 1. For the want of opportunities of mental development; 2. Through the infirmities of age; 3. Through envy of their contemporaries. II. In a criminal sense. To be carnally-minded is death. The soul buried in carnality, as a slave is buried who has no liberty. III. In a virtuous sense. Self buried with Christ. Crucified with Him. Dead to the world.[d]

*Rev. Gilbert Rule* (*r.* 13).—Mr. Rule was minister of Alnwick, in Northumberland, during a period of persecution. Being compelled to resign his charge, he went to Berwick, where, for the support of his family, he engaged in the medical profession. His enemies continuing their persecution, engaged some of the worst of men to waylay and murder him. A messenger was sent to him at midnight, to request him to visit a person in the country who was represented as very ill. The kind-hearted man expressed so much sympathy for the supposed sick person, and so readily prepared to go to his relief, that the messenger relented, and he could not forbear telling Mr. Rule the whole affair. Thus his life was spared, and God showed how easily he can bring to nought the counsel of the wicked.

14—18. (14) **but**, introducing the deep confidence of his heart in God, amid both his consciousness of sin and peril of life,[a] (15) **my times**, the various vicissitudes of my life: life's "sundry and manifold changes." (16) **face to shine**, Ps. iv. 6. (17) **silent**, *etc.*, marg. *let them be cut off for the grave.* (18) **lying lips**, that so freely slander the King. **proudly**, with stiff neck. **contemptuously**, with high and insolent demeanour.

*Our times in God's hand* (*r.* 15).—Consider—I. Our dependence on God. In His hands are—1. The occurrences of life; 2. The seasons of death. II. Our security in God. 1. None can destroy us before our time; 2. None shall hurt us without His permission. Learn—To seek God without delay, to serve Him without fear, to trust Him without carefulness.[b]

*Two appeals* (*r.* 18).—When Demades the orator addressed himself to the Athenians, "I call all the gods and goddesses to witness," said he, "the truth of what I shall say;" the Athenians, often abused by his impudent lies, presently interrupted him by exclaiming, "And we call all the gods and goddesses to witness that we will not believe you."—*Waiting the Lord's time.*—When the Rev. George Whitefield was last in America, the Rev. W. Tennent paid him a visit as he was passing through New Jersey; and one day dined with him and other ministers at a gentleman's house. After dinner Mr. Whitefield adverted to the difficulties attending the Gospel ministry; lamented that all their zeal availed but little; said that he was weary with the burden of the day: and declared the great consolation, that in a short time his work would be done, when he should depart and be with Christ. He then appealed to the ministers if it was not their great comfort that they should soon go to rest. They generally assented, except Mr. Tennent, who sat next to Mr. Whitefield in silence, and by his countenance discovered but little pleasure in the conversation. On which Mr. Whitefield, tapping him on the knee, said, "Well, brother Tennent, you are the oldest man among us: do you not rejoice to think that your time is so near at hand, when

you will be called home?" Mr. Tennent bluntly answered, "I have no wish about it." Mr. Whitefield pressed him again. Mr. Tennent again and again answered, "No, sir, it is no pleasure to me at all; and if you knew your duty, it would be none to you. I have nothing to do with death; my business is to live as long as I can, as well as I can, and to serve my Master as faithfully as I can, until He shall think proper to call me home." Mr. Whitefield still urged for an explicit answer to his question, in case the time of death were left to his own choice. Mr. Tennent replied, "I have no choice about it; I am God's servant, and have engaged to do His business as long as He pleases to continue me therein. But now, brother, let me ask you a question. What do you think I should say, if I were to send my man into the field to plough; and if at noon I should go to the field, and find him lounging under a tree, and complaining, 'Master, the sun is very hot, and the ploughing hard; I am weary of the work you have appointed me, and am over-done with the heat and burden of the day. Do, master, let me return home, and be discharged from this hard service.' What should I say? Why, that he was a lazy fellow, and that it was his business to do the work that I had appointed him, until I should think fit to call him home."

Charity, and Love, to walk the world, and bless it. Of every tear that sorrowing mortals shed on such green graves, some good is born, some gentler nature comes. In the destroyer's steps there spring up bright creations that defy his power, and his dark path becomes a way of light to heaven." —*Dickens.*

19—22. (19) **laid up**, ready in store. waiting for necessary occasions. God is never taken unawares by the distresses of His people.[a] **before . . men**, in spite of. (20) **hide them**, as Israel was hidden by the pillar cloud, shining light to them, and being dread darkness to their foes. **the pride**, or violent schemes. **pavilion**, booth, tent of boughs, sheltering from heat. (21) **strong city**, Zion; or more prob. the shelter city found beyond Jordan.[b] (22) **in my haste**, when fleeing in fear.[c]

*The goodness of God to His believing people* (*vv.* 19, 20).—In speaking of His goodness, we shall consider it—I. In a general view. Notice—1. That which is laid up for them; 2. That which God has actually wrought for them. II. With a particular reference to their intercourse with the ungodly world. 1. Exceedingly bitter are those pains which men inflict upon each other by calumnies and reproaches; 2. Put against these God does provide an effectual antidote. Apply:—Seek to attain the character here drawn; let us enjoy the privileges conferred upon us.[d]

*J. Foster's regard for the Book of Psalms.*—In his last days, John Foster would have nothing but the Holy Scriptures, and chiefly the Psalms, read to him. Salmatius, the celebrated French scholar, at the end of life found he had so far mistaken true learning and the source of solid happiness as to cry out, "Oh! I have lost a world of time!—time, that most precious thing in the world!—whereof had I but one year now, it should be spent in David's psalms and Paul's epistles." Many another learned man has uttered dying regrets that he had not given more of his hours and heart to the Book of books. Death is a stern and faithful teacher. Fitting words of godly sorrow and of faith then seem worth more than all the eloquence and science of earth. In his last sickness Augustine had the penitential psalms inscribed on the wall of his room.

a "We may compare the Arabic line, 'Never be cast down, O afflicted one, for God has many mercies *hidden*' (in store for thee)."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

b *Mahanaim*, 2 Sa. xviii.

c Comp. Is. xl. 27.

d *C. Simeon, M.A.*

*v.* 20. *Sydney Smith*, i. 227.

*v.* 22. "And when I made haste, I said." This is a verb used as an adve b, and the meaning is simply as A. V. has it: "For I said in my haste." According to Gesenius and Fürst, however, we should substitute for "haste," "fear," or "terror."

23, 24. (23) **above**, *etc.*, He would have all learn fr. God's gracious ways with him. **faithful**, those in whom is found

a *Perowne.* Ps. xxvii.

*b Beta* in 400 Sks.

c. 23. *W. Dunlop*, i. 376; *W. L. Brown*, 23. "Certain it is that, among the poor, the approach of dissolution is usually regarded with a quiet and natural composure, which it is consolatory to contemplate, and which is as far removed from the dead palsy of unbelief as it is from the delirious raptures of fanaticism. Theirs is a true, unhesitating faith, and they are willing to lay down the burden of a weary life, in the sure and certain hope of a blessed immortality."—*Southey.*

both trust and steadfastness. (24) hope, "hope and waiting are marks peculiar of the O. T. dispensation."[a]

*An incitement to courage* (*v.* 24).—I. Here we have characters specified. "All ye that hope in the Lord!" 1. To hope in the Lord is to expect our all from Him; 2. To have some reason for that expectation: 3. Implies the use of means that we may realise the expectation. II. Advice administered, "Be of good courage." 1. Consider the perils, etc., that attend us; 2. The cause in which we are engaged: 3. The Captain who leads us; 4. The rewards that await us. III. The strength that is promised us. God strengthens us—1. By communicating a knowledge of truth to the mind; 2. By confirming the will in the cause of truth; 3. By drawing the affections wholly towards Himself. Apply:—Are we the people of God? Does our hope inspire us with courage? Does God strengthen us?[b]

*Story of Rev. J. Mair* (*v.* 23).—When the Rev. James Mair, late of West Linton, was preaching, by appointment, at Gateshaw, near Morebattle, in the south of Scotland, during the singing of the psalm his text, and all he had prepared, entirely escaped him. A part of the psalm, which was just then singing, fixed upon his mind: the words were—"O love the Lord, all ye His saints." Accordingly he read them for his text. The heads and particulars clearly presented to his mind an abundance of useful illustration. He found himself in a happy and pleasant frame. Whenever he looked amongst his audience he observed serious attention and many tears. The good man declared that he never enjoyed such a day of the Son of Man in His power and glory.

## *PSALM THE THIRTY-SECOND.*

author,—David

*The second of the seven penitential Psalms.*

1, 2. (1) blessed, comp. Ps. i. 1.[a] transgression, open defection fr. God's covenant.[b] sin, personal defilement. covered, and so hidden, that it is to God the Holy One as if it had not taken place.[c] The idea of covering underlies the conception of atonement. (2) imputeth, reckoneth to a person what is not properly his (Le. vii. 18). iniquity, deviation from that wh. is well-pleasing to God: perversity. no guile, no attempt to extenuate the sin.[d]

*Maschil*, used of 13 Psalms, and meaning a didactic or instructive poem.

*a* Matt. v. 3—11; Ito. iv. 7.

*b* "Sin is called transgression, as being a breaking loose or tearing away fr. God."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* "Our merciful God, when He sees us under this mantle, this covering, Christ spread upon His Church, conceals His knowledge of our sins, and suffers them not to reflect upon our consciences, in a consternation thereof."—*Donne.*

*The forgiveness of sins* (*v.* 1).—I. The description of those who are pronounced blessed. Not the wealthy, etc. 1. They are sinners; 2. They are pardoned sinners; 3. They are pardoned by the Lord. II. The ground of pardon. 1. The meritorious cause is the work of Christ; 2. Yet all will not be saved; faith is necessary, and also repentance, and also confession. III. The happiness of those who are pardoned. 1. They are delivered from the awful consequences of sin; 2. Justification invariably accompanies the pardon of sin; 3. And hence the pardoned sinner is saved from sin itself. Apply:—The Lord invites: come let us reason, etc. The death of Christ increases the condemnation of the impenitent.

*The joy of pardon* (*v.* 1).—What a heavy burden is sin where it is not pardoned! Elements are not burdensome in their own place; but how soon may they feel it! Two sorts of consciences feel the burden of sin, a tender conscience and a wounded conscience. It is grievous to a tender heart, that values the love of

God, to lie under the guilt of sin, and to be obnoxious to His wrath and displeasure. Broken bones are sensible of the least weight; certainly, a broken heart cannot make light of sin. Go to, wounded consciences, and ask of them what sin is. "A wounded spirit who can bear?" Oh the blessedness of being eased of this burden![e]

3—5. (3) **kept silence**, feeling sin, but restraining repentance and confession.[a] **roaring**, or groaning. "Bitter struggles of conscience, with severe prostration of bodily powers."[b] (4) **thy hand**, *etc.*, God's punishing hand, felt in the sinner's own spirit. **moisture**, vital juice, dried up by inward conflicts, and hardening himself against God's humblings.[c] (5) **acknowledged**, or made confession. **thou forgavest**, God ever graciously responds to the humbled and penitent soul.[d]

*Confession and forgiveness* (*v.* 5).—From this we gather—I. That the condition of forgiveness is confession. II. That confession must be made to God and not to man. III. Confession to God secures forgiveness with, as the context shows, increase of grace and holiness. Apply:—Cease from man whose breath, etc. Let us go with boldness to the throne of grace.[e]

*The drought of summer* (*v.* 4).—The fields of Canaan are refreshed with frequent and copious rains, while some of the neighbouring countries are scarcely ever moistened with a shower. In the winter months the rain falls indiscriminately, but seldom in the summer. Soon after the heats commence, the grass withers, the flower fades, every green thing is dried up by the roots, and the fields, so lately clothed with the richest verdure, and adorned with the loveliest flowers, are converted into a brown and arid wilderness. To the uniform withered appearance of the fields during the reign of an Eastern summer, and not to any particular year of drought, the Psalmist refers in these plaintive terms: "My moisture is turned into the drought of summer." When conviction slept, and conscience was silent, the soul of David resembled a field refreshed by the genial showers of heaven; but the moment God in anger entered into judgment with him, and set his sins in order before his face, his courage failed, his beauty was turned into corruption, and his strength into weakness; "the commandment came, sin revived, and he died."[f]

6, 7. (6) **shall every one**, or let every one. **in a time**,[a] *lit.* of finding, or a time of acceptance, ere his humblings pass into overwhelming judgments. **floods**, *etc.*, the fig. of affliction (Ps. lxix. 1, 2). (7) **thou . . place**, Adam fled *from* God to hide, but Dav. flees to hide *in* Him. **compass**, give me songs wherever I may go.[b]

*The hiding-place* (*v.* 7).—I. The Christian's hiding-place is God. 1. In His bounty; 2. His power; 3. His forbearance; 4. His grace. II. It is a present hiding-place. 1. Not to be prepared when needed; 2. Suited to us as exposed to sudden trouble; 3. As subject to unexpected temptation; 4. And when we have fallen. III. It is an unequalled hiding-place. 1. Near; 2. Always open; 3. Large; 4. Abundantly supplied; 5. Free; 6. Impregnable. Apply:—To those who are not Christians it is a necessary hiding-place. How may you enter? Christ is the way.[c]

*d* "The forgiveness of God must be based on sincerity on the part of the forgiven." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*e* *T. Manton* (1678).

*a* "Reference is made to the year during wh. Dav. had cherished his sin, without confessing his guilt. 2 Sa. xii. 1—5." — *Wordsworth.*

*b* Ps. vi. 2, cii. 5.

*c* "In the summer-heat of anxiety his vital moisture underwent a change; it burned and dried up." — *Delitzsch.*

*d* "This accords exactly with the narrative. Nathan asks no more from the king, and at once declares his pardon. 2 Sa. xii. 13." — *Spk. Com.*

*e* *Analyst.* r. 5. *Bp. A. Lake*, 133; *Bp. H. King*, 2 *Sers.*; *Dr. H. Hole*, iv. 208; *E. Bicncoue*, iii. 171; *Bp. Jackson*, *Repentance*, 53; *T. Adams*, iii. 1.

*f* *Paxton.*

*a* "At the time of visitation." — *Kay.*

"When God's Spirit inclines us to seek pardon." — *Pausset.*

"He who seeks Jehovah when He may be found, shall not be swept away when His judgments are let loose like a flood of waters upon the earth." — *Perowne.*

*b* Ps. v. 12.

c *R. Berry.*

v. 6. *Dr. T. Playfere*, 183; *B. Hinton*, 165.

v. 7. *F. Elwin*, i. 64.

vv. 7—11. *Dr. J. Donne*, iii. 1.

d *Keach.*

*God a hiding-place* (*v.* 7).—I. A hiding-place is usually a strong place: God is a strong God, almighty. II. A hiding-place is an invisible and obscure place, not known to everybody—a place that enemies have much ado to find: God is invisible, the unknown God to sinners and the heathen. III. A hiding-place is a covering or shelter from many evils; from the scorching heat of the sun, the blustering storms of wind and hail: God is the hiding-place of His people in persecution, temptation, etc. IV. A hiding-place frees from fear, and much abates the hurries and discomposures of the mind: God, as a hiding-place, allays the fears of His people, and keeps them in constant peace. V. A hiding-place doth disappoint the enemies who expect to devour those whom they seek: God disappoints the enemies of His people by preserving them from their power, etc.[d]

8—11. (8) I, *i.e.* Jehovah. guide . . eye, or "my eye being upon thee."[a] (9) mule (2 Sa. xiii. 29). lest, *etc.*, better rendered, "or it will not come nigh thee" to obey thee.[b] (10) sorrows. as Divine punishments. (11) be glad, *etc.*, comp. Ps. xxxi. 24.

*The advantages of religion* (*v.* 10).—I. The sorrows of the wicked. 1. Who are the wicked? 2. What are their sorrows? II. The advantages of believers. 1. Who are believers? Their trust in God is enlightened, not presumptuous; heartfelt, not hypocritical; active, not indolent; evangelical, not legal; 2. What are their advantages? They are the objects of Divine mercy. It environs, it defends them.[c]

*A soldier and his wife* (*v.* 10).—Several years ago a man and his wife resided in the town of Frome, in Somersetshire. They were both at that period enemies to religion, and lived very ungodly lives. In the course of time the husband enlisted into the army. During his absence from home his wife was induced to attend upon the ministry of the Gospel in the town where she resided. It was instrumental in her saving conversion to God. She immediately felt concerned for her wicked husband, who was far from home. About this time she received a letter from him, dated at Ramsgate, informing her that he was about to return. She dreaded the thought of meeting him again, lest he should persecute her on account of her religion. While he was at Ramsgate, however, it had pleased God also to impress the heart of this soldier with the truth of the Gospel. He at once became solicitous for the soul of his wife, whom he supposed to be still as he left her, a persecutor of righteousness; and he dreaded the prospect of her opposition. He arrived at Frome in the evening of the day. As he drew near his cottage he heard the sound of singing and prayer, and found that some pious persons were there assembled, holding a prayer meeting. And judge, O Christian reader, what an affecting and happy interview this pious pair enjoyed, when he opened his cottage door, and she beheld her husband enter, and they fell and wept upon each other's necks as Christians, as "new creatures," as friends of God, as "heirs together of the grace of life!"

a "The guidance with the eye is a gentle guidance. A look is enough, as opposed to that bit and bridle which the mulish nature requires."—*Perowne.*

b "Whose adornment is in bit and bridle (not as man's ornament), which is in the graciousness of a pliant and ready will. The sense has been happily expressed by Horace: 'A horse's ear is in his bitted mouth.'"—*Wordsworth.*

c *G. Brook.*

vv. 8, 9. *H. Melville*, ii. 289.

vv. 9, 10. *F. D. Maurice*, 339.

v. 10. *Abp. Usher*, xiii. 404; *D. W. Vincent*, i. 297.

## PSALM THE THIRTY-THIRD.

author,—unknown: composed after the captivity

*Subject is,—The God who rules the world is also the defender of His people.*

1—4. (1) praise is comely,[a] words and mode of expression belonging to the later times, after the exile.[b] (2) harp, only two instruments are mentioned in this *v.*—the psaltery, prob. a twelve-stringed harp, played with the fingers, and the harp, a ten-stringed instrument, played on with a plectrum. (3) new song, "an expression especially characteristic of the later compositions."[c] One springing freshly from a thankful heart. loud noise, accompaniments of trumpets and cymbals. (4) word,[d] all revelations of God's will.

*A call to worship* (*vv.* 1—3).—We note that—I. True worship is happiness to the godly. 1. It is the highest happiness of intelligent existences; 2. Only the godly can offer true worship. II. True worship is becoming to the godly. 1. It agrees with his character; 2. It is congenial with his spirit; 3. It is in keeping with his obligations. III. True worship is music to the godly. There is—1. Variety; 2. Freshness; 3. Accuracy; 4. Heartiness.[e]

*Power of music.*—Napoleon's army came to a pass in the Alps where the rocks could not be surmounted by the ammunition-wagons. He went to the leader of the band, and asked for his portfolio. Then, turning over until he came to an inspiring march, he said, "Play that." The whole band struck the air with their instruments; and over the rocks went the ammunition-wagons. While Dr. Kane was in the Arctic regions, ice-bound, his men were kept from despair, and probably mutiny, by one of their number playing on an old violin.[f]

5—9. (5) righteousness, the principle. judgment, the manifestation or expression. Reference is to righteousness in God, not in man. goodness,[a] graciousness. (6) heavens made, Ge. i. 6, ii. 1; Ps. cxlviii. 5. host, term combining the two ideas of multitude and order. (7) heap, "a fig. suggested by the appearance of the waves of the sea."[b] (8) in awe, of His sublime power. (9) stood fast, *i.e.* it was, as God commanded, Ge. i. 3.

*The goodness of God* (*v.* 5).—I. Let us consider the goodness of God in creation. II. His goodness is also observable in the gracious, though often mysterious, dealings of His Providence. III. We have also to consider the goodness of God in the redemption of the world.[c]

*Creation.*—We may with much probability suppose that the sun, that immense globe, distant from us 95,000,000 of miles, around which our earth is ever turning, had not been *created* on the fourth day. It had most likely sprung into being at the time, "in the beginning," when God created the heavens and the earth. But it was on the fourth day that it was lighted up for us, and became the "light of this world" by day; and by night our attendant star, the moon, which is but the mirror and reflector of the sun, began to shine upon our earth with her borrowed light. Remark particularly that it is not said in Scripture that God *created* the sun on the fourth day. No; we are only told that God said, "Let there be lights," and "God *made* lights." Is it not just as I might say of the lamp which is

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*a* Fr. A. S. *cymlic*, suitable, fit.
*b* Ps. cxlvii. 1.
*c* *Jennings and Lowe.*
*d* "There is no distinct personification of the Word, but a preparatory stage in the development of that fundamental truth of Christianity is traceable in this Psalm."—*Spk. Com.*
*e* *Dr. Thomas.*
*f* *R. West.*

*a* Ps. civ. 24; Is. vi. 3, xl. 9; Ha. iii. 3.

*b* *Perowne.*

"The expression describes the convex surface of the ocean apparently overhanging the plains, but it undoubtedly includes a reference to Ex. xv. 8; Jos. iii. 13—16." —*Spk. Com.*

*c* *E. Roberts, M.A.*

*v.* 5. *Dr. W. Paley*, ii. 274; *G. Burder, Vil. Ser.* 6.

*v.* 8. *Dr. J. Rogers*, iii. 1; *Dr. Dalgleish*, 3; *E. P. Waters*, 10.

A similar grand description occurs in the Hindu mythology, as the following quota-

tion from the *Upanishad* will show:—"In the beginning was self alone; there was nothing else. He thought, Let Me create the worlds, and He created these worlds."

*d Prof. L. Gaussen.*

now hanging from the ceiling of this room at present quite dark. "Let it be lighted;" and the instant the gas already within it is lighted it becomes a light? You would not say that I first placed the lustre there at the moment when I desired that it should be lighted; for the lustre may have been there three years before, but I made it a light to the room at the moment I caused it to be lighted up. The sun and moon had most probably been in existence like lamps or lustres still unlighted, we know not how long before: but when it pleased God to command them to become lights they were lighted, and then these two great globes became our lights, to give light to us by day and by night, the one by its own light, and the other by reflected light borrowed from the greater luminary.[d]

*a* Ja. i. 13–15.

*b Hugh Stowell, M.A.*

*c.* 10. *Dr. S. Clarke*, vi. 361.

*c.* 11. *Dr. G. Chandler*, i.

*c.* 12. *Dr. W. Delaune*, 268; *C. Bertheau*, ii. 1.

10–12. (10) bringeth, maketh frustrate. God is in all creation; He is also in Providence. devices, self-willed plannings.[a] (11) counsel, Pr. xix. 21. (12) blessed, *etc.*, comp. De. xxxiii. 29.

*The righteous rejoicing in God* (*v.* 12).—I. The righteous ought to rejoice in the Lord; only they have the right to do so. II. Praise is the comely expression of the joy of a Christian man. III. Music is a beautiful handmaid to the praises of God.[b]

*J. Knox* (*v.* 10).—This celebrated Scotch reformer had many surprising escapes from the malicious designs of his enemies. He was accustomed to sit at the table in his own house, with his back to the window; on one particular evening, however, he would neither himself sit in his chair, nor allow any one else to do so. That very night a bullet was shot in at the window purposely to kill him; it grazed the chair in which he usually sat, and made a hole in the foot of the candlestick.

*a* "He at once moulds their hearts, and understandeth all their wants."—*Huppeld.*

*b C. H. Spurgeon.*

13–15. (13) looketh, with minute and careful inspection. (14) place . . habitation, not described, but conceived as giving Him vantage-ground for His observations. (15) alike, not He maketh them all the same, but He controlleth them all.[a]

*The Lord looks upon us* (*v.* 13).—I. Perhaps no figure of speech represents God in a more gracious light than when He is spoken of as looking upon us. II. How can we but love Him when we know that He marks our path and orders our ways? III. He regards the poorest of His saints to show Himself strong on behalf of those who fear Him.[b]

*Legh Richmond's son.*—For the encouragement of young persons, mention might be made of Wilberforce Richmond, an interesting and pious son of Legh Richmond, who died early, and who could say, "There is not a Psalm I have not turned into a prayer." The same has been done by some who were familiar with the original Hebrew of the book. Thus the Rev. David Brown, a devout English clergyman, accustomed himself to use them in that language as the medium of his most private and earnest devotion, whether of contrition, supplication, or praise. In all affliction and in all rejoicing, he alike called upon God in the language of David.

*cc.* 13, 14. *H. Stebbing*, iii. 55.

*c.* 15. *Dr. J. Leland*, ii. 173; *Dr. J. Duchal*, ii. 75.

The deepest self-abasement often accompanies the fullest assurance of faith.

16, 17. (16) saved, in battle. It is characteristic of the true Israelite that he looks to God's deliverance and defence, sees behind all second causes. (17) horse, much esteemed by the surrounding nations for war purposes.[a]

*The vanity of confidence in the creature* (*v.* 17).—The horse as

*a* "The king, mighty man (or warrior), and war-horse, are selected as types of earthly power

the most powerful instrument in ancient warfare represents those that are now most relied upon. The ironclad, torpedo, cannon, rifle, as vain things for safety in our case, as the horse in the olden time. I. We find that people in times of peril, when looking for a way of escape, or a means of conquest, frequently trust in the creature rather than the Creator. Bible Ills. : Saul's armour ; Peter's sword, etc. II. The best human contrivance is not sufficient to trust to in times of peril. Examine some of the most approved in the light of history. 1. Union ; 2. Wealth ; 3. Knowledge. III. Consider the lessons of the subject :—1. We are not to ignore the good creatures of God any more than trust them wholly. Folly of the "Peculiar People of Plumstead." 2. We are fully to trust to God in the right use of things lawful.[b]

18—22. (18) **the eye**, *etc.*, Job xxxvi. 7. (19) **soul**, or life. **famine**, the common calamity of the East. (20) **shield**, or defence. (21) **rejoice . . trusted**, faith bringing present peace. (22) **according as we hope**, responsive to our attitude towards Thee.[a]

*Trust in God* (*vv.* 20, 21).—I. The condition of the trusting soul. 1. Confidence that God will come ; 2. Waiting implies knowledge of God, love of God, well-grounded hope, prayer. II. God's present relation to the believer. III. The believer's feeling towards God. His heart rejoices in—1. His covenant-keeping faithfulness ; 2. In the riches of His grace ; 3. In His all-sufficiency. IV. The reason. 1. The name ; 2. The holiness ; 3. The love of God.[b]

*Freeness of Divine mercy* (*v.* 18).—Let me tell thee that the mercy of God flows freely. It wants no money and no price from thee, no fitness of frames and feelings, no preparation of good works or penitence. Free as the brook which leaps from the mountain side, at which every weary traveller may drink, so free is the mercy of God. Free as the sun that shineth, and gilds the mountain's brow, and makes glad the valleys without fee or reward, so free is the mercy of God to every needy sinner. Free as the air which belts the earth and penetrates the peasant's cottage as well as the royal palace without purchase or premium, so free is the mercy of God in Christ. It tarrieth not for thee ; it cometh to thee as thou art. It waylayeth thee in love ; it meeteth thee in tenderness. Ask not how thou shalt get it. Thou needest not climb to heaven, nor descend to hell for it ; the word is nigh thee ; on thy lip, and in thy heart ; if thou believest on the Lord Jesus with thy heart, and with thy mouth makest confession of Him, thou shalt be saved.[c]

in all its greatness."—*Peroune.*

*b Hive*, Mag.

True faith does not require you to see your name written in the book of life; it is sufficient for you to close with God on the ground of His sure word of promise.

*a* "Our faith measures mercy (Matt. ix. 29), and if of grace, it is no more of debt (Ro. xi. 6)." —*Fausset.*

*b N. Galloway.*

In our present imperfect state there is seldom or never true faith without some admixture of unbelief, any more than there can be a new man without the remains of the old one.

Do not speak of hindrances to keep you from Christ : the chief hindrance arises from yourself. To try to hide your sin from God is the greatest sin of all.

*c C. H. Spurgeon.*

## *PSALM THE THIRTY-FOURTH.*

**author,—David**

*An acrostic Psalm. Subject, the reflections of a delivered one.*

Historical connection, 1 Sa. xxi. 13.

1—5. (1) **at all times**, whensoever opportunity is offered. (2) **boast**, the Heb. implies grateful exultation.[a] **humble**, meek, in sense of those submitting patiently to affliction. (3) **magnify**, ascribe glory to. (4, 5) **lightened**, or brightened, by the uplifting on them of the shinings of His countenance. **ashamed**, downcast, as by disappointment.

*Devotion exemplified* (*vv.* 2, 3).—Notice—I. David's determination to praise God. 1. The ungodly love to boast of themselves ;

*a* 1 Sa. ii. 1; Ps.

xliv. 8; Je. lx. 24; Lu. i. 46.

*b C. Simeon, M.A.* See *S. Basil, Op.* i. par. 1: *Erasmus, Op.* v. 267; *Dr. S. Chandler, Life of David*, i. 110.

v. 1. *Dr. J. Drysdale*, i. 325.

v. 2. *Dr. R. Lucas*, i. 333.

c *A. Fuller* (1800). "Sorrow is knowledge."—*Byron.*

2. The godly boast in the Lord. II. The effect he hoped to produce by this means. 1. He did not expect any benefit to accrue to the proud: 2. He hoped that to the humble his adorations would afford matter of unfeigned joy: 3. Let us stir up within ourselves a similar disposition. III. He exhorts others to cooperate with him in this blessed design. 1. Is it not a reasonable employment? 2. Is it not a delightful employment? 3. Is it not a necessary employment?[b]

*Praise in trial.*—Praise is the believer's helper in his trials, and his companion after trial. Jehoshaphat's army sang praises before the battle. David sang praises in the cave; Daniel, when the trap was set for his life, prayed and gave thanks three times a day as usual; and Jesus, when He would raise Lazarus, first lifted up His heart in thanks to the Father; and before He went to supper, first sang a hymn. So is praise also our solace after trial. Music is sweetest when heard over rivers, where the echo thereof is best rebounded by the waters; and praise for pensiveness, thanks for tears, blessing God over the floods of affliction, makes the sweetest music in the ears of heaven.[c]

6—10. (6) this poor man, a personal testimony, designed to encourage others. (7) the angel, used in a collective sense for "troops of angels."[a] (8) taste, gain a personal experience. (9) no want, many fancied wants there may be, but no real wants. (10) young lions,[b] not cubs, but lions in full vigour of life and energy.

*Answers to prayer* (*v.* 6).—I. The answer is sometimes immediate. Jehoshaphat, Hezekiah, Jonah, the first Christians for Peter. II. It is sometimes delayed, not therefore denied. This to exercise faith, hope, and patience. III. Sometimes inconsistent with the terms of the petition, like a teacher, a physician, a parent; Paul's thorn in the flesh. IV. Sometimes only indirect. Prayer always pleasing to God. 1. Be solicitous about answers; 2. Notice them: 3. When they do not come it should lead us to self-examination.[c]—*Tasting God's goodness.*—This psalm of David speaks of trouble and deliverance. He had found God very good to him, and wanted others to have the same help in trouble. I. What was it that David had tasted and seen? That God is good. Do not people know that? Yes, in part. Because the Bible says so. Read the whole verse. No one can know how good the Lord is till he trusts in Him. Many know that your Father is good, but only you, who are His child, know it fully. They know it by hearsay: you, by constant experience. We should try to know all about His goodness. II. Why was David so anxious that everybody should taste and see, etc.? When Hagar had found the water, she told Ishmael about it. How could she have helped doing so, even if he had not been her son? Those who were cured by looking at the brazen serpent would be sure to tell others. Happy people always want others to be happy too. III. How are we to know this goodness of the Lord? David says, taste and see. That is, taste in order that you may perceive, understand. But to taste anything it must be close at hand. We cannot taste the fruit that is growing in foreign lands, till it is brought near, or we are taken to it. God is near to us. He is a God nigh at hand, and not afar off. And we are brought nigh by the blood of Christ. It is not only near us, it is for us. If plate of fruit were on the table, and we were told not to tou

a Ge. xxvii. 1, 2; 2 Ki. vi. 17.

b Types of the cruel and violent. Ps. xxxv. 17; Job iv. 9—11.

c *G. Brooks.*

v. 6. *Bourdaloue*, 79.

v. 7. *Dr. Increase Mather, Apologeticus; J. Slade*, vi. 533.

v. 8. *W. Reeves*, 144; *Dr. S. Davies*, ii. 103; *Dr. W. F. Hook*, 18.

vv. 8, 9. *Dr. T. Arnold*, 220.

v. 10. *D. Wilson*, ii. 38.

"Six wings he wore, to shade his [illegible] divine; the pair that clad each shoulder-head, came meeting o'er his breast with modest pride; and the pair that clad each thigh, stately come, were [illegible] reared [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

it might as well be a thousand miles away. The fruit in the shop-window is nearly the same to us as if it were a thousand miles off. We see it. The sight makes us long to taste it. The goodness of God is for us. We are told to taste, etc. It is shown us in the Bible, in nature, in good men, that when we see we may long to taste. Some things, especially, of this goodness that we need to taste. His forgiveness, etc. If we taste pardon, we shall see—understand from experience—how good the Lord is: for the man who trusts in Him is blessed, *i.e.* happy.

*Guardian angels.*—One day while Flattich, a pious minister of Wirtemberg, was sitting and meditating in his arm-chair, one of his foster-children fell out of a second story window, right before him, down upon the pavement below. He calmly ordered his daughter to go down and pick up the child. On doing so, she found the child not only alive, but without having sustained the least injury. The noise occasioned thereby had called out a neighbour's wife, who reproached Flattich for his want of attention to his foster-children, for she had seen him quietly reposing in his arm-chair when the boy fell out of the window. While she was thus scolding, her own child, which she had brought along, fell from a bench in the room and broke one of its arms. "Do you see, good woman," said Flattich, "if you imagine yourself to be the sole guardian of your child, then you must constantly carry it on your arm. I commend my children to God, and if they then fall, they fall into the arms of an angel."

**11—14.** (11) **children,** the audience of men may be thus affectionately addressed.[a] **the fear,** or the first principle of the fear. (12) **loveth . . days,** wishes to have a long and prosperous life. The great desire of O. T. saints. (13) **tongue,** that most unruly member.[b] (14) **pursue it,** follow after it with great exertion and eagerness.

*A Sunday-school sermon* (*v.* 11).—I. The duty of the teacher. 1. He should invite; 2. Teach; 3. The subject of his teaching should be the fear of the Lord. II. The duty of those who wish to learn. 1. They must come; 2. Hearken. III. Enforce these duties. 1. By the command of God; 2. The example of the saints of old; 3. The consequence of remaining in ignorance; 4. The blessings of sanctified instruction.[c]—*The use and abuse of the tongue.*—We have here—I. A wonderful gift referred to—speech. 1. It is singular. Man distinct from dumb creation. The talking animal. So peculiar to man that some can hardly believe that once a dumb ass spoke. Birds, animals, insects, emit inarticulate sounds. People talk of language of flowers, but only man can speak. 2. It is useful. In religious life, praise, prayer, preaching, reading. In social life, conversation. Consider the sad lot of one who is dumb. 3. It is powerful. The orator stirs thought and feeling, and influences conduct. Mary of Scotland feared the tongue of Knox more than an army of 10,000 men; and Philip of Macedon, that of Demosthenes more than an army of 100,000 men. The tongue of Peter the Hermit roused all Europe. II. A gift that is often abused. 1. Profane swearing; 2. Indecent language; 3. Boastful and idle words; 4. Falsehood. No gift more wonderful, or useful, or glorious; and none so sadly abused. We blame people for misusing their influence, or mind, or time; but how many misuse speech! III. A gift that requires the help of the Giver in order that we may

mail, sky-tinctured grain."—*Milton.*

"While a man rests in any degree on his own merits for acceptance with God, it is of little consequence whether he be a pagan idolator or a proud, ignorant Pharisee: both go about to establish their own righteousness; neither submits to the righteousness of God: and I know not which of the two is more distant from the kingdom of God."—*J. Milner.*

*a* 1 John ii. 28, etc.

*b* Ps. xv. 2, 3, xxxix. 1—3, cxli. 3; Pr. iv. 24, xiii. 3, xxi. 23; Jas. iii. 2.

*c Gamma* in 400 Sks.

*v.* 11. *Dr. Donne,* v. 270; *T. Gataker,* i. 1; *Bp. Hickman,* ii. 1; *Bp. Horne,* v. 357; *E. Cooper,* vi. 319.

*vv.* 11—14. *J. Abernethy,* iv. 236.

"Avoid in conversation all singularity of accuracy. One of the bores of society is the talker who is always setting you right; who, when you report from the paper that 10,000 men fell in some battle, tells you it was 9,970; who, when you describe your walk as two miles out and back, assures you it wanted

half a furlong of it. Truth does not consist in minute accuracy of detail, but in conveying a right impression; and there are vague ways of speaking that are truer than strict facts would be. When the Psalmist said, 'Rivers of waters run down mine eyes, because men keep not Thy law,' he did not state the fact, but he stated a truth deeper than fact, and truer." — *Dean Alford.*

"On every Mohammedan tombstone the inscription begins with the words, 'He remains.' This applies to God, and gives sweet comfort to the bereaved. Friends may die, fortune fly away, but God endures—He remains."—*Perrine.*

use it well. 1. He helps by giving His Holy Spirit to cleanse the heart out of whose tempers, desires, thoughts, etc., the abuse comes: 2. He helps by the laws He imposes, and by the restraints He creates: 3. He helps by the good things He gives us to talk about: 4. He helps in answer to prayer. Learn—(1) To cultivate the right use of speech: (2) To discountenance and reprove those who abuse it: (3) To pray that we may keep a watch over our lips, that we may not sin against God with our tongue.

*The surgeon and his patient.*—Mr. Meikle, a gentleman of eminent piety, was a surgeon at Carnwath. He was once called to attend a gentleman who had been stung in the face by a wasp or bee, and found him very impatient, and swearing, on account of his pain, in great wrath. "O doctor," said he, "I am in great torment; can you any way help?" "Do not fear," replied Mr. M.; "all will be over in a little while." Still, however, the gentleman continued to swear, and at length his attendant determined to reprove him. "I see nothing the matter," said he, "only it might have been in a better place." "Where might it have been?" asked the sufferer. "Why, on the tip of your tongue."—*Master Terry.*—Master Terry was a child who read many good books and thought very seriously, and spent a large portion of his time in walking and pondering by himself. He was seldom found without some good book or other in his pocket, even when he was but little above five years old. He was constant in his retirement for secret prayer. But that which deserves particular remark, was a concern which this young child had, some time before he died, for the spiritual welfare of an aged faithful servant, who had been above forty years in the family, and who, by weakness, was confined to her chamber, having passed the seventieth year of her age. This little child, when not eight years old, would take delight to be with her; of his own accord he would talk to her of the things of God, and pray with her: in which, as that servant said, he would deliver himself pertinently, and in such an affecting manner, as to surprise his friends. He continued thus till she died, and was thereby no small help and comfort to the poor servant. Thus out of the mouths of babes and sucklings God perfects praise. He died in the tenth year of his age.

15—18. (15) **eyes**, *etc.*, comp. Job xxxvi. 7.[a] (16) **face . . against**, the Heb. pānîm is the face of *anger*. **remembrance**, by depriving them of posterity.[b] (17) **the righteous**, these words are not in the orig., wh. is general. "when men cry." (18) **nigh**, in merciful tenderness, as a gracious healer. **broken heart**, "those in whom the egotistical, *i.e.* self-loving life, is broken at the very root."[c] **contrite**, or crushed. "Those whom grievous experiences have subdued and humbled."

*The contrite in heart* (*v.* 18).—I. What is that spirit which the Lord approves. 1. Unamiable to man but pleasing to God: 2. It justifies God's denunciations against sin; 3. Manifests a state of mind duly prepared for the reception of the Gospel. II. In what way He will testify His approbation of it. 1. He will be nigh to such; 2. He will save them. III. Encouragements to such. 1. This state is the fruit of God's love to the soul; 2. It is the earnest and foretaste of eternal inheritance. Apply—(1) To those in whom this spirit is not found; (2) To those who are dejected by it.[d]

[a] See also 1 Pe. iii. 12.

[b] "The dread that, together with a man's posterity, his name and memory should utterly perish, is specially characteristic of the Semitic races. See Job xviii. 17, xxxi. 8; Ps. xxi. 10, cix. 13." — *Spk. Com.*

[c] *Delitzsch.*

Ps. li. 17; Isa. lvii. 15.

[d] *C. Simeon, M.A.* v. 15. *T. Spooner*, 191.

*Afflictions of the righteous.*—God, who is infinite in wisdom, and matchless in goodness, hath ordered troubles, yea, *many* troubles, to come trooping in upon us on every side. As our mercies, so our crosses seldom come single; they usually come treading one upon the heels of another. They are like April showers—no sooner is one over, but another comes. And yet, Christians, it is mercy, it is rich mercy, that every affliction is not an execution, that every correction is not damnation. The higher the waters rose, the nearer Noah's ark was lifted up to heaven: the more thy afflictions are increased, the more thy heart shall be raised heavenward.[c]

19—22. (19) many, *etc.*, not more than fall upon other men, save as the feelings of the righteous make him more sensitive. (20) all his bones, simple fig. of protection fr. any serious injury.[a] (21) evil shall slay, the natural result of evil is to bring about the destruction of the evil-doer. desolate, *i.e.* condemned, deemed guilty. (22) none . . desolate, or left under condemnation.

*Consolation* (*v.* 19).—I. The peculiar affliction of God's people. 1. Internal—temptations, doubts, fears; 2. External—misrepresentation, persecution. II. Their deliverance. 1. Consolation in trial; 2. Compensation for loss.[b]

*Note on ver.* 20.—A curious opinion of the Jews is, that wherever their bodies may be buried, it is only in their own promised land that the resurrection can take place: and therefore they who are interred in any other part of the world must take their way to Palestine under ground: and this will be an operation of dreadful toil and pain, although clefts and caverns will be opened for them by the Almighty. Whether it arose from this superstition, or from that love for the land of their fathers which, in the Jews, is connected with the strongest feeling of faith and hope, certain it is that many have directed their remains to be sent there. "We were fraughted with wool," says an old traveller, "from Constantinople to Sidon, in which sacks, as most certainly was told to me, were many Jews' bones put into little chests, but unknown to any of the ship. The Jews, our merchants, told me of them at my return from Jerusalem to Saphet, but earnestly entreated me not to tell it, for fear of preventing them another time." Sometimes a wealthy Jew has been known to import earth from Jerusalem wherewith to line his grave.[c]

## *PSALM THE THIRTY-FIFTH.*

1—4. (1) plead, or contend. An expression suitable to judicial proceedings. that strive, or my adversaries. fight, the speaker being a warrior, conceives of God's help in ways familiar to his own mind.[a] (2) take . . buckler, as a man of war.[b] (3) stop the way, stand in it to keep my enemies from reaching me.[c] (4) let, *etc.*, comp. v. 26; Ps. xl. 14, 15, lxx. 2, 3.

*The prayer of revenge.*—I. It is despicably presumptuous. II. It is utterly merciless. This is seen—1. In the calamities invoked—shameful disgrace, terrible expulsion, sudden destruction; 2. In the delight with which these calamities are anticipated. III. Egotistically pious. 1. He tells the Almighty how wicked

*vv.* 15, 16. *G. Moberly*, ii. 1.

*v.* 17. *W. Butcher*, i. 49.

*c T. Brooks* (1659).

*a* Some think there may be prophetic reference to our Saviour's crucifixion. Jas. xix. 33—36.

*b W. W. Whythe.*

*v.* 19. *H. Smith*, 196; *J. Holland*, i. 323; *G. Nicholson*, 49.

*v.* 22. *T. Thomas*, 35.

"It matters not at what hour of the day the righteous fall asleep; death cannot come to him untimely who is fit to die; the less of this cold world, the more of heaven—the briefer life, the earlier immortality."—*Milman.*

*c Burder.*

author.—prob. David: some say Jeremiah

*A cry to God against ungrateful persecutors.*

Best associated with the enmity of Saul, and Saul's party.

*a* "Lit. *devour my devourers.*"—*Fausset.*

his enemies were, and how good he was; 2. He implores the Almighty to interfere for the destruction of his enemies and the happiness of himself and friends; 3. He promises the Almighty to praise Him on the condition that his enemies are punished, and he is saved. Learn—(1) The liability of the best men to sink into wrong spiritual moods; (2) The honesty of Biblical biography.[d]

*Doubting* (v. 3).—Sometimes natural melancholy obstructs the sense of Divine comfort. As it is in clear water, when it is still and transparent, the sun shines to the very bottom; but, if you stir the mud, presently it grows so thick that no light can pierce into it,—so it is with the children of God: though their apprehensions of God's love be as clear and transparent, sometimes, as the very air that the angels and glorified saints breathe in heaven, yet if once the muddy humour of melancholy stirs they become dark, so that no ray of comfort can break into the deserted soul.[e]

5—9. (5) **as chaff,** Job xxi. 18. **chase,** lit. *strike*, as with blast of plague.[a] (6) **dark,** *etc.*, "darkness and utter slipperiness." (7) **pit . . digged,** *lit.* their netted pit: or pit furnished with a net.[b] (8) **at unawares,** suddenly, when unprepared. (9) **joyful,** bec. of overthrow of these persecutors.

*Margaret, Duchess of Alençon.*—"You ask me," writes Margaret, Duchess of Alençon, the favourite sister of Francis I. of France, and a devoted Christian woman—"you ask me, my children, to do a very difficult thing—to invent a diversion that will drive away your *ennui*. I have been seeking all my life to effect this; but I have found only one remedy, which is reading the Holy Scriptures. In perusing them, my mind experiences its true and perfect joy: and from this pleasure of the mind proceed the repose and health of the body. If you desire me to tell you what I do to be so gay and well, at my advanced age, it is because as soon as I get up I read those sacred books. There I see and contemplate the will of God, who sent His Son to us on earth to preach that holy word, and to announce the sweet tidings that He promises to pardon our sins and extinguish our debts, by giving us His Son, who loved us, and suffered and died for our sakes. This idea so delights me that I take up the Psalms, and sing them with my heart, and pronounce with my tongue, as humbly as possible, the fine hymn with which the Holy Spirit inspired David and the sacred authors. The pleasure I receive from this exercise so transports me, that I consider all the evils which may happen to me through the day to be real blessings; for I place Him in my heart by faith, who endured more misery for me. Before I sup I retire in the same manner to give my soul a congenial lesson. At night I review all that I have done in the day. I implore pardon for my faults: I thank my God for His favours: and I lie down in His love, in His fear, and in His peace, free from every worldly anxiety."

10—14. (10) **all my bones,**[a] every part of me. (11) **false witnesses,** or witnesses of injustice and cruelty.[b] (12) **spoiling of my soul,** *lit.* bereavement to my soul.[c] His wife Michal and his friend Jonathan were severed fr. him: and he felt friendless and alone. (13) **sick . . sackcloth,** the Psalmist indicates his ready and hearty sympathy with others. **prayer returned,**

*b* Comp. Ex. xv. 3; De. xxxii. 41.

*c* "The word rendered *stop* may mean a *battle-axe*."—*Spk. Com.*

*d* *Dr. Thomas.*

v. 3. *T. Adams*, 898; *J. H. Stewart*, 252.

*e* *Hopkins.*

*a* "It is the angel who took off Pharaoh's chariot wheels, so that they drove them heavily, that is intended here."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* "A common metaphor, borrowed from the artifices employed for taking wild beasts. Pit lightly covered over, in wh. is concealed a net."—*Perowne.*

v. 5. "'Begone, fellow! contend not with my brother or me: thou art as chaff before the wind!' 'Not a word, or soon wilt thou be as cotton before the wind!'"—*Roberts.*

v. 7. *G. W. Lewis*, li. 328.

"Ah! surely nothing dies but something mourns."—*Byron.*

*a* "Regarded, in Heb. physiology, as the seat of the most acute sensations, whether of pain or of pleasure." *Spk. Com.*

*b* "The Psalmist

better read, "My prayer (for others), may it return into mine own bosom."[d] (14) mourning, with usual signs of Oriental grief.

*Compassion to the sick* (*vv.* 13, 14).—I. How much the sick stand in need of our compassion. 1. They are bereft of all that they before enjoyed; 2. Nor have they any substitute to repair their loss; 3. Their distress is aggravated if poverty be added to their other trials. II. What is that measure of compassion which we ought to exercise towards them? 1. Our sympathy ought to be very deep; 2. We should especially feel this in regard to their souls. III. The benefit that will accrue from it to our own souls. 1. Our exertions, however great, may not always prosper in the way we could wish; 2. But our labour shall be recompensed unto our own bosom. Address—(1) The poor; (2) Those who visit the poor; (3) The congregation at large.[e]

*Kindness to the sick.*—A few years ago, a number of boys, who had been taught in a Sabbath school near Sheffield, met in a field, and instead of spending their money in oranges, on what is called Shrove Tuesday, they agreed to give all they had to their teacher, who they knew was in great distress. They tied up the money in an old cloth, and when it was dark they opened his door, and threw it into the house. Inside of the parcel was a small piece of paper, on which was written, "Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shalt be fed."—*Azel Backus and the heathen.*—At a festival at Ganesa's (Gumputtee's) temple, Ceylon, while the multitude of worshippers, assembled at the temple, were engaged in boiling their rice for an offering, one of them who went for water, fell into the well. As soon as the circumstance was made known to the crowd, they rushed to the well, and among them was the *pandarum* (priest) of the temple, who, as soon as he had gratified his curiosity, returned to the temple. None among them manifested the least concern for the unfortunate man who was sunk in the water. They looked into the well, and talked about the man in such imminent danger with the most perfect indifference. Not an individual seemed to think assistance could or ought to be rendered, till one of the head-men came to the spot: he exerted all his influence to induce some one to dive into the water, which any person accustomed to swimming might have done with perfect safety: but his efforts were in vain. He then sent for the priest, who was known to be an expert swimmer. At the command of the head-man he came, but excused himself from the act of mercy required of him, by saying that he could not absent himself so long from the duties of the temple without sustaining a loss. Just at this moment came to the place a young man, unknown to the crowd, who as soon as he learned that a fellow being was drowning, threw aside his garment, and leaped into the well. After repeatedly diving, he found the body, and raised it to the surface of the water, from which it was taken by the bystanders. As soon as the noise and confusion occasioned by taking out the lifeless body had subsided, a loud whisper passed along the crowd, "Who is that young man? Who is that good man?" They were not a little surprised, and some of the enemies of Christianity confounded, when they were told that this good Samaritan was Azel Backus, a Christian! This event did not a little towards stopping the mouths and weakening the strength of some who were arrayed against Christ-

laments the injustice and ingratitude of his adversaries. Comp. Saul's own admission, 1 Sa. xxiv. 18."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* "Very touching are the words, 'My soul is bereaved,' I am alone in the world. I, who have ever sought to help the friendless and comfort the afflicted, and who prayed so earnestly for others, am forsaken of all."—*Perowne.*

*d* Matt. x. 13; Lu. x. 6.

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

"One man has kindness deep within him; and when the occasion comes, the rind or shell is cracked, and the kernel is found. Such a man's heart, too long clouded, like a sun in a storm-muffled day, shoots through some opening rift, and glows for a period in glory. But there are other natures that are always cloudless. With them, a cloud is the exception, shining is the rule. They rise radiant over the horizon; they fill the whole heavens with growing brightness, and all day long they overhang life, pouring down an undiminished flood of brightness and warmth."—*H. W. Beecher.*

tians and the cause in which they are engaged; and is to all, who have any knowledge of Scripture, a striking comment on the words of inspiration, "Overcome evil with good."

15—18. (15) mine adversity, strongly contrasting his ways toward them, and theirs toward him. abjects,[a] despicable ones; worthless ones; slanderers. I knew it not, or "whom I knew not:" persons beneath my notice. (16) hypocritical mockers, *lit.* men who make profane jests for the sake of a cake:[b] "vile backbiting parasites."[c] (17) my darling, *Heb.* "my only one."[d] (18) much people, another phrase for "the great congregation."

*Providence.*—The entrance of Frederick William Robertson into the ministry came about by the barking of a dog. Lady Trench resided next door to Captain Robertson; she had a daughter seriously ill; the young lady was prevented from sleeping by the barking of Captain Robertson's dog. The families were strangers to each other; but Lady Trench wrote to beg that the dog might be removed; the dog was not only removed, but in so kind and acquiescent a manner, that Lady Trench called to express her thanks. She was so much struck with the bearing of the eldest son, that an intimacy sprang up between the families, which resulted in the introduction of young Robertson to some of Lady Trench's clerical friends; one of them, Mr. Daly, now Bishop of Cashel, was no sooner introduced than he struck at the question, whether it were definitely fixed that he should go into the army; the impression of his unaffected piety convincing Mr. Daly that he ought to be in the Church. "If," says Frederick Robertson, in one of his papers, "I had not met a certain person, I should not have changed my profession; if I had not known a certain lady, I should not probably have met this person; if that lady had not had a delicate daughter who was disturbed by the barking of my dog; if my dog had not barked that night, I should now have been in the dragoons, or fertilising the soil of India. Who can say that these things were not ordered, and that, apparently, the merest trifles did not produce failure and a marred existence?"[e]

19—23. (19) wrongfully, without any adequate or just cause. wink,[a] *see* Pr. vi. 13, x. 10. (20) quiet, but for their interruptions. And loving quiet. (21) mouth wide, in scornful laughter: represented by *Aha, aha.* (22) thou hast seen, God knoweth us altogether, and this for us is the beginning of rest. (23) stir up thyself, the earnest language of the importunate man.

*Note on v.* 21.—Dr. Boothroyd. "They open wide their mouth against me, and say, Aha! aha! our eye seeth what we wished." See that rude fellow, who has triumphed over another; he distends his mouth to the utmost, then claps his hands, and bawls out, "*Aqā! aqā!* I have seen, I have seen." So provoking is this exclamation that a man, though *vanquished*, will often commence another attack. An officer who has lost his situation is sure to have this salutation from those he has injured. Has a man been foiled in argument, has he failed in some feat he promised to perform, has he in any way made himself ridiculous, the people open their mouths, and shout aloud, saying, "*Aqā!* finished, finished, fallen, fallen." Then they laugh, and clap their hands, till the poor fellow gets out of their sight.[a]

*a* Fr. Latin *abjectus*, part of *abjicere*, to throw away.

*b* "Hangers on at the tables of the rich, who, by wittieisms and buffoonery, make entertainment for the guests, and received their dinner in return."—*Gesenius.*

*c* *Jennings and Lowe.*

*d* Ps. xxii. 20.

*e* *Paxton Hood.*

A coloured Presbyterian deacon was in the habit of shutting his eyes, while he sang with great unction, "Fly abroad, thou mighty Gospel!" and not seeing the contribution-plate. "Oh, yes!" said the plate-bearer; "but you just give something to make it fly."

*a* An insulting gesture.

"Pecuniary aid, by those who have the means, is the most easy form in which benevolence can be gratified, and that which often requires the least, if any, sacrifice of personal comfort or self-love. The same affection may be exercised in a degree much higher than itself, and often much more useful to others, by personal exertion and personal kindness."—*Abercrombie.*

*b* *Roberts.*

24—26. (24) thy righteousness, wh. is based on perfect knowledge and infinite love. None need fear the righteousness of God's judgments. (25) ah . . it, *lit.* "Ah. ah, our soul," *i.e.* our desire: just what we wanted. swallowed, *etc.*, 2 Sa. xvii. 16. (26) let them, *etc.*, words of bitter sarcasm.

*Uprightness of heart.*—Uprightness of heart is the will of God in the inner parts. The Scripture speaks of a "double mind;" of a heart, and a heart which is no upright heart. There are rivals in the heart sometimes; and then the soul halts between two, but cannot serve both: this is not an upright heart. Integrity is the mind pure, embracing truth and nothing else, but as found walking in truth, and for truth's sake. If thou wouldst be perfect, sell all; that is, part with all but Christ. Integrity is a nature Divine throughout; an unleavened lump; a heart one with Christ; a heart after God's own heart.[a]

27, 28. (27) that favour, stand on my side: remain faithful to me in this time of slander and trouble. prosperity, or peace. (28) speak. in grateful, trustful songs.

*The fatherhood of Jehovah* (*v.* 27).—This passage, when steadily looked at, has a very wonderful light, almost, in some respects, like that of the sun. When any collection of the solar rays is separated by the use of the prism three different kinds of rays are said to result: some that illumine, some that exert chemical action, and some that give heat. In this pencil of Scriptural rays we find a similar threefold division; we find—I. Wonderful truth. II. Wonderful faith. III. Wonderful comfort.[a]

*God's providence.*—The Rev. Hansard Knollys was one of the subjects of the persecution in the seventeenth century. He was prosecuted in the High Commission Court, and fled to America, whence after a time he returned. Having lived for some time in obscurity in London, he had but sixpence left, and no prospect for the support of his family. In these circumstances he prayed, encouraged his wife to remember the past goodness of God to them, and reflect on His promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" paid his lodging, and then went out, not knowing where the providence of God would lead him to seek the means of subsistence. He had walked but a short distance when he was met by a woman who told him that some Christian friends had prepared a residence for him and his family, and had sent him money and other comforts. They were greatly impressed with this manifestation of Divine goodness in their behalf, and the wife exclaimed, "Oh, dear husband, how sweet it is to live by faith, and trust God's faithful word! Let us rely upon Him whilst we live, and trust Him in all straits."

## *PSALM THE THIRTY-SIXTH.*

1—4. (1) the transgression, *etc.*, this clause is more precisely rendered, "Transgression is (as) an oracle to the wicked in his inner heart."[a] within my heart, should be, "within *his* heart." no fear, *etc.*, illus. Lu. xviii. 2—4. (2) flattereth, made it all smooth to himself. Satisfied himself that his sin would *not* be found out. (3) words, *etc.*, his sin is of heart, of lip, and of life. (4) mischief, vanity, or iniquity.[b] abhorreth not evil, at last the very sense of evil gets destroyed.

*a N. Lockyer* (1650).

"We know that when a man is benevolent and sympathetic, he is in the state in which we can draw more good things from him than when he is in any other state."—*Beecher.*

*a Homilist.*

"If we go to one for some kindness, we do not go to him on those days when he is gloomy, when his nerves are shaken, when his health is suffering, and when his business is going wrong; we go to him when he is full-fed, and comfortable, and genial, as it is at such times that he is most likely to grant our request. We bring him into a good condition with himself; and when his mind is in a high and summery mood, we let out our little secret with a reasonable hope of success."—*Beecher.*

author,—David

*Psalm on the contrast between the evil and the good.*

*a* "The wicked hath an oracle of transgression in his heart."—*Peroyne.*

"Crime is per-

sonified as dwelling in the heart of the wicked, and as uttering suggestions, to wh. he listens as to an oracle."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Mic. ii. 1.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

See *S. Ambrose, Op.* i.

r. 1. *J. Hales*, 221; *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 234.

r. 2. *J. Edwards*, ii. 217; *Dr. J. Jamieson*, i. 220; *Dr. W. Craig*, i. 97; *J. Cosens*, ii. 63.

*r.* 4. *Dr. N. Marshall*, ii. 52.

*d Sir Rob. Wilson.*

*a* "A burst of rapture, here is the true oracle."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* "Such epithets as these show how deeply the Heb. felt the beauty and majesty of natural scenery: the mountains were to him an outward representation of the right-ousness, deep-rooted in the very essence of the Godhead and towering over the earth in its manifestation." *Spk. Com.*

*c* "Hast thou ever seen a beast or a bird that followed a trade? and yet they are fed without toil."—*Jewish Writings*, thro' *Jennings and Lowe.*

*d* Pr. xvi. 22; Je. li. 13; Jno. iv. 14. v. 26; Re. xxii. 1.

*e G. Brooks.*

*r.* 5. *Dr. A. Littleton*, 335.

*f Spencer.*

*The awful state of the ungodly* (*v.* 1).—I. How God interprets sin. 1. As adultery; 2. As rebellion; 3. As idolatry; 4. As downright atheism. II. What interpretation we should put upon it. We should arrive at the conclusion that—1. There is no sense of God's presence: 2. No regard for His authority: 3. No concern about His approbation: 4. No fear of His displeasure. Apply:—How marvellous is the forbearance of God! 2. How unbounded is the love of God that He has provided a Saviour for us![c]

*Bonaparte's delight in massacre.*—"Bonaparte, having carried the town of Jaffa by assault, many of the garrison were put to the sword, but the greater part flying into the mosques and imploring mercy from their pursuers, were granted their lives. Three days afterwards, Bonaparte, who had expressed much resentment at the compassion manifested by his troops, and determined to relieve himself from the maintenance and care of 3,800 prisoners, ordered them to be marched to a rising ground near Jaffa, where a division of French infantry formed against them. When the Turks had entered into their fatal alignment, and the mournful preparations were completed, the signal gun fired. Volleys of musketry and grape instantly played against them, and Bonaparte, who had been regarding the scene through a telescope, when he saw the smoke ascending, could not contain his joy."[d]

5—9. (5) **mercy**, Heb. *chesed*, loving-goodness. **faithfulness**, to His promises.[a] (6) **great mountains**, *lit.* mountains of God:[b] **great deep**, so unfathomable. **man and beast**, comp. Ps. civ. 21.[c] (7) **excellent**, or precious: highly appreciated. **shadow**, *etc.*, comp. Ps. xvii. 8. (8) **fatness . . house**, fig. for the privileges of communion with God. **pleasures**, or delights, "thy Edens." (9) **fountain of life**, source of all true life.[d]

*The Divine loving-kindness* (*vv.* 7, 8).—Consider—I. Its excellence. 1. It is unmerited; 2. Disinterested: 3. Costly; 4. Munificent; 5. Endless. II. The duty it imposes on man. 1 Trust for the supply of temporal wants: 2. For preservation and comfort amid the trials of life; 3. For grace to maintain spiritual stability and progress: 4. For admission into heaven. III. The happiness it entitles believers to expect. 1. In God's house on earth: 2 And in heaven.[e]

*The joys of heaven* (*v.* 8).—St. Augustine tells us that one day he was about to write something upon the eighth verse of the thirty-sixth Psalm, "Thou shalt make them drink of the rivers of Thy pleasures:" and, being almost swallowed up with the contemplation of heavenly joys, one called unto him very loudly by his name: and, inquiring who it was, he answered, "I am Hierom, with whom in thy lifetime thou hadst so much conference concerning doubts in Scripture, and am now best experienced to resolve thee of any doubts concerning the joys of heaven. But only let me first ask thee this question, 'Art thou able to put the whole earth, and all the waters of the sea, into a little pot? Canst thou measure the waters in thy fist, and mete out heaven with thy span? or weigh the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance?' If not, no more is it possible that thy understanding should comprehend the least of those joys."[f]

10—12. (10) continue, draw out at length: prolong. The glory of God's loving-kindness is its constancy and continuance.[a] (11) come against, the proud oppressor trampling me down. remove me, drive me from my land. (12) there, with prophet. vision, the Psalmist seems to see the very place of their overthrow.[b]

*God's continued care implored* (*v.* 10).—I. What need we all have of the blessing here implored! 1. Of this, whatever their attainments, all stand in need; 2. What should we do if God were to withdraw His loving-kindness from us? II. On what grounds are the upright authorised to expect it? 1. By the promises of God; 2. By the intercession of Christ; 3. By the honour of God Himself. Apply:—Seek to answer the character here described; implore of God the blessing you so greatly need; seek it also for others.[c]

*Figurative use of "feet" and "hands"* (*v.* 11).—Here we have another instance of the feet and hands being used for the whole man. Our Saviour said of the man: "The hand of him that betrayeth Me." Of a sick person to whom the physician will not administer any more medicine, it will be said *parcgarikiuttân*. "The hand of the doctor has forsaken him." A servant is under the hand of his master. The foot of pride probably alludes to the custom of the conqueror trampling upon the vanquished: for in the next verse it is said, "The workers of iniquity are fallen: they are cast down, and shall not be able to rise."[d]

## PSALM THE THIRTY-SEVENTH.

1—4. (1) fret,[a] *Heb.* "Heat not thyself." Do not get angry, and impatient.[b] Look at the matter coolly. (2) cut down, Job xiv. 2.[c] (3) trust, sure of safety. thou dwell, or dwell thou quietly. land, of Palestine, God's honoured land. be fed, lit. *feed truth*, or feed on your own faithfulness.[d] (4) delight thyself, find thy pleasure in Him.[e]

*How to obtain our desires* (*v.* 4).—I. The Psalmist's advice. It means—1. Delight in the favour of God; 2. In His service; 3. In His doctrine. II. The Psalmist's encouragement. But these desires must be—1. Innocent; 2. Spiritual; 3. Scriptural; 4. Earnest; 5. Expressed.[f]

*Providence* (*v.* 3).—A good man, overwhelmed with trouble, and unable to extricate himself, came to the resolution, as his last resource, of leaving his native country. There remained one Lord's-day more previous to his departure, and from an apprehension that it would be the last he should ever spend in his own land, it impressed him with more than usual solemnity. At the house of God, the text which the minister selected for the subject of his discourse was this: "Trust in the Lord, and do good: so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed." At the hearing of these words, his attention was particularly arrested; nor did he feel himself less interested in the sermon, every sentence of which appeared peculiarly applicable to his circumstances. He regarded the whole as the voice of Providence. Impressed with this conviction, he changed his purpose, resolved to struggle against the torrent of adversity,

*a* He. xiii. 8.

*b* "David describes their destruction afar off, as it were from a watch tower, and gives determinate sentence of it, as assuredly as if it were close at hand."—*Calvin.*

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*v.* 10. *T. Dale,* 1121.

"From the low prayer of want and plaint of woe O never, never turn away thine ear! Forlorn, in this bleak wilderness below, ah! what were man, should heaven refuse to hear!"—*Beattie.*

*d Roberts.*

author,—David

*A didactic Psalm; subject, the justifying of God's providence.*

"The true object of the whole Ps. is to warn the hearer against the temptation to repine at the success of the ungodly."—*Spk. Com.*

*a* From Fr. *frotter*, fr. L. *fricare*, to rub; A. S., *fretan*, to eat, to gnaw.

*b* Pr. xxiii. 17, xxiv. 1.

*c* Matt. vi. 30; 1 Pe. i. 24.

*d* "The drift of the passage is, we think, 'Abide contentedly where Jehovah has placed you, and let not your faith in His love be impaired by these social anc-

and await the pleasure of God concerning him. The appointed time to favour him soon came. The Lord turned his captivity, like that of Job, and caused his latter end to be more blessed than his beginning.

5—7. (5) commit, cast thy way; roll thy anxiety;[a] repose it on the Lord. (6) bring forth, even as He brings forth the light of the morning.[b] (7) rest in the Lord, *lit.* be silent, or be still for Him.[c] who prospereth, comp. Ps. lxxiii. 3.

*Character of those who rest in the Lord.*—The state of heart and conduct in which we are to wait for His goodness is thus described. I. Trust in the Lord. II. Do good. III. Delight thyself in the Lord. IV. Commit thy way unto the Lord.[d]

*Faith in the promises.*—A captive was brought before an Asiatic prince: the scimitar was already raised over his head, when, oppressed by intolerable thirst, he asked for water. A cup was handed him: he held it as it apprehensive lest the scimitar would fall while he was in the act of drinking. "Take courage!" said the prince: "your life will be spared till you drink this water." He instantly dashed the cup of water to the ground. The good faith of the barbarian saved him. The word had passed; it was enough; and the captive went on his way rejoicing.

8—11. (8) in any wise, read the clause, "Fret not thyself, since that can only lead thee to do evil."[a] (9) cut off, and so wilt thou be if, through fretfulness, thou becomest an evil-doer. wait, God's time for vindicating the righteousness of His people. inherit the earth, Matt. v. 5. (10) it shall not be, or he is not; not the least trace of him shall remain.[b] (11) but . . peace, this represents a general law, leaving untouched the exceptions.[c]

*Fretful envy of the wicked* (*v.* 8).—I. The passion rankling in the heart has an evil tendency. 1. It inflicts an injury on the soul of the possessor; 2. It stimulates to the infliction of injury upon others. II. The connection of the wicked with the earth is not enviable. 1. It exposes to a violent termination; 2. It is utterly unsatisfying. III. Their opposition brings on them terrible misery. 1. It involves the contempt of Jehovah; 2. The recoil of their own purposes.[d]

*Providence.*—Shepherds are very careful to provide good pasture for their sheep. The Good Shepherd will provide for His sheep. Thou shalt have thy constant bread of allowance. He will rather make ravens feed thee, as they did Elijah, than see thee starve. If our hearts were settled in the belief of this, it would be a means of freeing us from much perplexing care. Sheep, you know, will make shift to pick food where your other cattle, horses and kine and oxen, cannot. They can graze upon the tops of hills and barren mountains, or in fallow fields, and do well enough. The people of God, that know what it is to live by faith in the promise, can find that sweetness and contentment in a low, despised condition in the world, which others can never find in such a condition.[e]—*Indian and the Quaker meeting.*—A little before the revolutionary war, there were a few families of Friends, who had removed from Duchess county and

matics.'" — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* Job xxii. 26, xxvii. 10; Is. lviii. 14.

*f Zeta* in 400 Sks.

*a* 1 Pe. v. 7.

*b* Je. li. 10.

*c* "What you have to do, and cannot, is set forth as a burden."—*Fausset.*

*c* "A word expressive of that calm resignation which leaves itself absolutely in the hands of God. Prayer Bk. Version is, 'Hold thee still in the Lord.'"—*Perowne.*

*d Pulpit Notes*, vv. 5, 6. *J. Brougham*, ii. 125.

*a* "Be not incensed, it only leads to evil doing." — *Delitzsch.*

*b* Job viii. 18, 22.

*c Spk. Com.*

*d Dr. Thomas.*

vv. 10, 11. *A. Farindon*, iv. 52. v. 11. *B. Philpot, Bloom. Lec.* x. 161.

"High and pure benevolence not only is dispensed with willingness, when occasions present themselves, but seeks out opportunity for itself, and feels in want of its natural and healthy exercise when deprived of an object on which it may be bestowed."—*Dr. Abercrombie.*

*e P. Henry* (1657)

President Lincoln, walking one day with his secretary, stopped at a little

settled at Easton, then in Saratoga county, New York. These requested the favour of holding a religious meeting, which was granted. The section of country proved to be one which was so much distressed by scouting parties from both the British and American armies, that the American Government, unable to protect the inhabitants, issued a proclamation, directing them to leave their country: and they did generally go. The Friends requested to be permitted to exercise their own judgment (saying, "You are clear of us in that you have warned us"), remained at their homes, and kept up their meeting. Robert Nisbet, who lived at that time at East Hoosack, about thirty miles distant, felt a desire to walk through the then wilderness country, and sit with the Friends at their week-day meeting. As they were sitting in meeting, with their door open, they discovered an Indian peeping round the door post. When he saw the Friends sitting without word or deed, he stepped forward and took a full view of what was in the house: then he and his company, placing their arms in a corner of the room, took seats with the Friends, and so remained till the meeting closed. Zebulon Hoxie, one of the Friends present, then invited them to his house, put a cheese and what bread he had on the table, and invited them to help themselves: they did so, and went quietly and harmlessly away. Before their departure, however, Robert Nisbet, who could speak and understand the French language, had a conversation with their leader in French. He told Robert that they surrounded the house, intending to destroy all that were in it; "but," said he, "when we saw you sitting with your door open, and without weapons of defence, we had no disposition to hurt you—we would have fought for you." This party had human scalps with them.

12—17. (12) **gnasheth,**[a] as in violent rage. (13) **laugh,** Ps. ii. 4. **his day,** in which he receives his full deserts.[b] (14) **such as be,** *Heb.* upright of way. (15) **enter . . heart,** all evil becomes at last woe upon the evil-doer. (16) **a little,** comp. Pr. xv. 16. **riches,** *lit.* noise and tumult, as incidental to much wealth. (17) **arms,** with which violent deeds are done.

*The Divine hand* (*v.* 14).—I. It is a strong hand. II. It is a redeeming hand. III. It is a tender hand.

*Rev. J. Garie* (*v.* 12).—This gentleman, with other ministers, attempted, in 1790, to disseminate the Gospel in some of the darkest parts of Ireland. After preaching several months at Sligo, with every appearance of success, a new place of worship was opened, which was attacked and seriously injured the day after. These attacks were repeated, till at length it was burned down. A dreadful outrage was committed on one of the principal friends of Mr. G., and he himself was in so much danger of violent death, that he was compelled to change his lodgings every night; but he still continued at his post. One evening a man entered his room with a pistol, threatening to take away his life. Mr. Garie, holding up a small Bible, advanced towards him, and with a smiling countenance looked him full in the face. Struck with his mild and innocent appearance, the man immediately retired from him, and his life was preserved. Mr. Garie afterwards returned to Scotland, settled at Perth, and died in 1802.[c]

shrub, and looked into it; then stooped, and put his hand down through the twigs and leaves, as if to take something out. His secretary said to him, "What do you find there, Mr. Lincoln?"—"Why," said he, "here is a little bird fallen from its nest, and I am trying to put it back again."

A dying soldier was exhorted to throw himself into the arms of Jesus. "He is not here: he is not here!" was his reply. "Not here, not here!" were his last mournful words.

*a* Fr. Old Eng. *gnaste*, Icel. *gnista*, to grind or strike together the teeth.

*b* Ps. cxxxvii. 7; Job xviii. 20; Je. l. 27, 31; Ob. 12.

*c* 16. *G. Burnet*, ii. 1; *J. Fawcett*, i. 255; *Dr. A. Gerard*, i. 379.

"God's hand is still under us, and His goodness is lower than we can fall."—*Trapp.*

The husbandman is never so near the vine as when he prunes it. God's hand is a tender hand even when He uses the pruning knife.

*e R. T. S.*

*a* "The enemies of Jahve are like the *glory of the meadows*. They vanish away like smoke, they disappear." — *Delitzsch.*

*b* Pr. iii. 33.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

v. 18. *Dr. P. Doddridge*, i. 268.

"To others do (the law is not severe) what to thyself thou wishest to be done; forgive thy foes, and love thy parents dear, and friends, and native land, nor these alone: —all human weal and woe learn thou to make thine own." — *Beattie.*

*a* 2 Co. iv. 9.

*b* "The policy of the Hebrew commonwealth would of itself lead to the ultimate enrichment of God-fearing men, and in a well-ordered period such a statement would involve no hyperbole." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

v. 25. *W. Enfield*, i. 300; *R. Southgate*, i. 110; *H. Boys*, 31; *Bp. Mallby*, 360; *H. Marriott*, iii. 337.

*d R. T. S.*

"When men wish to grow in Christian graces they must lift their souls up into the atmosphere of Divine benevolence, and out of real, pure, genial love all Christian graces will flow most easily and naturally!

18—22. (18) knoweth the days, Ps. i. 6, xxxi. 15. (19) ashamed, or confounded. evil time, when calamities are impending. (20) fat of lambs, wholly consumed on the altar. Reference is, however, more prob. made to the transient character of the grass of the fields.[a] (21) borroweth, is brought so poor that he must borrow and cannot pay. Circumstances are changed at last, and the righteous can lend, nay give. (22) blessed of him, *i.e.* God; it is that blessing makes truly rich.[b]

*The relation of the righteous* (v. 21).—I. Relation to society. 1. He has the means of helping; 2. He has the disposition to help. II. Relation to God. 1. He blesses the righteous but not the wicked; 2. He establishes the righteous but not the wicked; 3. He is pleased with the righteous but not with the wicked. III. Relation to the world. 1. They will be kept from utter destitution; 2. Neither they nor their children shall be utterly neglected.[c]

*Dr. Jas. Hope.*—In the last hours of Dr. James Hope, a London physician, when the same passage was quoted, he said, "They do comfort me; there is no darkness. I see Jordan, and the heavenly Joshua passing over dry-shod." It was at eighty years of age that Professor Carl Ritter, the celebrated geographer, finished his course. The night before the event, as his pastor pressed his hand, quoting this beautiful psalm, "The Lord is my Shepherd," Ritter replied, "He has guided me thus far, and He will not desert me now."

23—26. (23) ordered, or established. "God secures the just man from falling." (24) fall, into misfortune; perhaps even into sins of infirmity. utterly cast down, be prostrated.[a] (25) old, indicating the period at which the Ps. was written.[b] (26) seed is blessed, *lit.* is for blessing.

*God's interest in His people* (vv. 23, 24).—We observe—I. The interest which God takes in His people. 1. He orders their steps; 2. He delights in their way; (3) He upholds them with His hand. II. What return He looks for at their hands. 1. We must cheerfully obey His will; 2. We must simply depend on His care. Apply—(1) To the self-confident and secure; (2) The fearful and disconsolate.[c]

*A strong rebuke* (v. 25).—There was once a man who had an only son, to whom he was very kind, and gave everything that he had. When his son grew up and got a house, he was very unkind to his poor old father, whom he refused to support, and turned out of the house. The old man said to his grandson, "Go and fetch the covering from my bed, that I may go and sit by the wayside and beg." The child burst into tears, and ran for the covering. He met his father, to whom he said, "I am going to fetch the rug from my grandfather's bed, that he may wrap it round him and go a-begging!" Tommy went for the rug, and brought it to his father, and said to him, "Pray, father, cut it in two; the half of it will be large enough for grandfather, and perhaps you may want the other half when I grow a man, and turn you out of doors." The words of the child struck him so forcibly, that he immediately ran to his father and asked forgiveness, and was very kind to him till he died.[d] — *The honest insolvent.*—A gentleman of Boston, says a religious journal, who was unfortunate in business thirty years ago, and consequently unable at that time to meet his engagements with his creditors,

after more than twenty years of toil, succeeded in paying every creditor (except one whose residence could not be ascertained) the whole amount due to them. He has in that twenty years brought up and educated a large family—but still he owed one of his former creditors; he was not satisfied to keep another's property; he made inquiry, and received information that the party had died some years since. He again pursued his inquiry respecting the administrator, and ascertained his name and residence, wrote to him, acknowledged the debt, and requested him to inform him of the manner he would receive the money. A few days since he remitted the whole amount, principal and interest.

"A famous captain once said to a soldier dying with him, 'Hadst thou been obscure all thy life, yet art thou not a little honoured to-day in dying with thy master.'"—*N. Caussin.*

27—29. (27) dwell, *etc.*, a promise or assurance. Thou shalt dwell.[a] (28) loveth judgment, to exercise judgment. (29) shall inherit, bec. He who loveth judgment will surely appear for them.

*Doing good* (*v.* 29).—Psalm thirty-seventh is not a devotional but an ethical psalm. It contains no praises, petitions, or confessions. It is a series of aphorisms embodying a single truth, and is not designed to unfold progressive thought, but to enforce one sentiment, with line upon line, like variations on a recurring strain of music. The third verse gives a practical inference suggested at every point along the Psalm. "Do good," not merely think about it. Will imaginary subscriptions help on good objects? "Do good," not merely talk about it. Will words bind up wounds and clothe the naked? "Do good" yourself, not wait for others, not complain of others, not merely set others to work, but up and about it your own self.

a So shalt thou abide securely for ever.

*v.* 27. *Bp. Beveridge*, vi. 470.

"I will, if I can, do something for others and heaven; not to deserve by it, but to express myself and my thanks. Though I cannot do what I would, I will labour to do what I can."—*Feltham.*

30—34. (30) speaketh, or uttereth. (31) in his heart, cherished as the inward, moving principle, always controlling his actions. steps, or *goings*.[a] (32) watcheth, *v.* 14. (33) in his hand, *i.e.* to his private murderous devices. judged, when his enemies try to work his ruin by process of law. (34) thou shalt see it, bec. thyself protected by the God on whom thou hast waited.

*The security of the upright* (*v.* 31).—I. The character of the upright. 1. God has engraven His law on his heart; 2. The forms his distinguishing character. II. Their security. This—1. Partly from the very character which they possess; 2. Principally from the care and fidelity of God. Hence we may see—(1) Whence it is that so many professors of religion dishonour their high and holy calling; (2) How inseparable is the union between duty and privilege.[b]

*Justice will overtake the wicked.*—As one that hath been either robbed himself, or that hath a friend murdered, if he have the party apprehended and laid fast in prison, is not presently out of patience because he seeth not him instantly executed, but is well content quietly to expect the time of the assizes, though it be half a year after, as long as he is sure that he will then have justice against him: so ought we not to fly out because evil-doers prosper, remembering that all wicked ones are in the meanwhile in this world, as in God's jail, under the chains of a guilty conscience, out of which there is no possible means of escape without judgment.[c]

a "In these *vv.* the righteous are described as to the elements of character, thought, word, and action."—*Fausset.*

b *C. Simeon, M.A.*, *v.* 30. *J. Norris*, iv. 1. *v.* 31. *Dr. Fothergill*, ii. 1; *R. Hall*, v. 257; *T. Blackley*, iii. 238. *v.* 34. *J. H. Newman*, ii. 64.

c *T. Gataker* (1650).

"All heavenly hearts are charitable. Enlightened souls disperse their rays."—*Feltham.*

35—40. (35) green bay tree, "a green, indigenous tree;"[a]

a "An indigenous

tree of luxuriant foliage." — *Delitzsch.*

*b* "Strange though such appeals may sound in our ears, numerous progeny, and a long line of descendants, are constantly set forward by the Heb. teachers, as rewards conditional on righteousness." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*c Stems and Twigs.*

*v.* 37. *Dr. J. Gill*, i. 498; *J. Wesley*, vii. 431; *R. Cecil*, iii. 80; *W. Jay*, vi. 277.

*d Roberts.*

not a feeble exotic. Comp. Ps. i. 3. (36) he passed away, or, more forcibly, "When one passed, lo, he was not." (37) perfect, in Old Testament. the sincere man. end, *etc.*, or "a man of peace hath a posterity." [b] Some think there is here an allusion to the good man's reward in another world. (38) end . . wicked, *i.e.* their posterity. (39. 40) because they trust, the whole lesson of the Ps. lies in these words.

*The true nobleman* (*v.* 37).—I. His pedigree. II. His honours. 1. His prayers are the delight of God; 2. His influence over man is great; 3. His personal safety is secure. III. His sentiments. IV. His pursuits. V. His trials. VI. His future. 1. Certain and lasting fame; 2. Deliverance from all anxiety and uncertainty; 3. Permanent safety; 4. Abundant endowments; 5. Admission to glory.[c]

*The green bay tree.*—The margin has, instead of green bay tree, "a tree that groweth in his own soil." Ainsworth. "I have seen the wicked daunting terrible, and spreading himself bare, as a green self-growing laurel." A truly wicked man is compared to a tamarind tree, whose wood is exceedingly hard, and whose fruit is sour. "That *passāsu*, i.e. fiend, is like the *marutha-marram*" (*Terminalia-Alate*). This tree resists the most powerful storms; it never loses its leaves, and is sacred to Vyraver, the prince of devils. I have seen some that would measure from thirty to forty feet in circumference. The tamarind tree at Port Pedro, under which Baldeus preached, measures thirty feet.[d]

## *PSALM THE THIRTY-EIGHTH.*

author,— David

*A prayer of a suffering penitent.*

Historically connected with Dav.'s guilt in the matter of Uriah.

1—5. (1) in thy wrath,[a] wh. the Psalmist feels he has much reason to fear. (2) stick fast, have entered deep. Poetical description of the pains of sickness.[b] presseth, falleth heavily. (3) rest, *i.e.* peace, freedom fr. pain. (4) over my head, like swirling waves. heavy burden, familiar fig. for sins, as they come to oppress and crush the spirit.[c] (5) are corrupt, or suppurate. From this we may guess the nature of his disease. Comp. Job and Hezekiah.

*a* Is. xxvii. 8; Je. xxx. 11, xlvi. 28.

*b* Job. vi. 4.

*c* Comp. bundle on back of Bunyan's pilgrim.

*David's distress and consolation* (*vv.* 1—9).—I. His distress. It was great. Let us notice—1. The source and cause of it: 2. The extent and depth of it. II. His consolation. He knew 1. That God, in the groanings of a penitent, recognises the voice of His own Eternal Spirit: 2. That to such expressions of penitence all the promises of God are made. Apply:—From the Psalmist's experience we see—(1) What an evil and bitter thing sin is; 2. How important it is to attain just views of the character of God.[d]

*The burden of sin.*—Sin is such a burden as will sink the soul down to hell, if it be not removed. And if any man feel it not to be a burden, it is because he is "dead in sin;" but where there is any life, the burden is very great. Repentance helps to remove the burden of sin; for when the soul repents, God forgives; and so the burden is taken away. The pardon of sin is that which takes away the burden of sin. And there must needs be sweetness in that which easeth the soul of such a burden as sin is.[e]

*c* "Strange though such appeals may sound in our ears, numerous progeny, and a long line of descendants, are constantly set forward by the Heb. teachers, as rewards conditional on righteousness." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*d C. Simeon, M.A.*

*St. Basil, Op.* i. par. 2; *St. Ambrose, Op.* i.; *Dr. A. Rivet, Op.* ii.

*v.* 1. *J. J. Blunt*, i.

*v.* 2. *H. Godwin*, iv. 162.

*vv.* 2—4. *Dr. J. Donne*, iv. 308.

*e M. Mead* (1683).

6—10. (6) troubled, marg. *wried*, twisted by violent spasms; bent; writhe with pain and sorrow. (7) loathsome, lit. *burning heat*. (8) feeble, "corpse-like cold;" benumbed. Psalmist describes the alternations of a fever fit. roared, with pain; groan aloud. (9) before thee, well known to thee. (10) panteth, palpitates: *lit.* goes round and round. light . . eyes, comp. Job xvii. 7.

*Discipline of affliction.*—To a certain extent, we can all see that discipline is good for us. What man of business repents him of the time he spent in what appeared to be the sharp discipline of school? Who does not wish that he had had more of it and sharper? The time when you strained all your powers, denied yourselves all your pleasures, and tied yourselves tight to your tasks, is the time which you remember most gratefully; had you your youth over again, you would make that the rule, and not the rare exception. Tell me which of you came through childish and youthful follies without some sharp lessons? Who has not been bitterly mortified by the wounding of his self-importance, or heartily laughed at for what he thought very wise and grand? The sharper the lesson the better it served its purpose. Looking back you would not wish one drop of its bitterness extracted; you would rather that the infusion had been stronger, that it might have killed the weakness at its very root. We see, so far, that good comes out of discipline. We do not sit down and cry over it. Hereby you consent to the wisdom of the discipline of God.[a]

11—14. (11) lovers, used in general sense. my sore, or affliction. Here again we may compare the case of Job.[a] (12) snares, taking advantage of his sickness, enemies at court plotted against the king.[b] (13) deaf man, put into a sick chamber could hear and know nothing of what was going on. (14) no reproofs, of the evils growing serious in palace and in nation.

*Affliction sanctifies.*—My short residence in London was rendered very pleasant by the cordiality of my friends. No human enjoyments, however, are unmixed; while others might, in the kindness of their hearts, congratulate my felicity, a multitude of anxieties poured in upon my mind from expected and unexpected quarters; and if they did not quite overwhelm me they at least prevented me from suffering that which was joyous in my lot to lift me up above measure. This is the peculiar way in which affliction (the little I have encountered) has operated for my good. It has always been sent seasonably, just when my vain heart was singing a requiem to its cares, and in danger of removing from religion to as great a distance as it is from distress. Sorrow humbles the mind and forces reflection. You know I mean sanctified sorrow, for there is a sorrow which leaves the soul (just as soap and nitre leave the Ethiopian) in the condition in which it found it.[c]

15—18. (15) in thee . . hope, or, "thee do I wait for." (16) I said, within myself[a] (or in my prayer). (17) to halt, in position where there is great danger of falling. sorrow, the suffering of affliction, making him unfit for kingly duties. (18) declare, in humble confessions.

*Praying negro boy.*—Mr. Smith, riding through one of the

*v.* 6. *T. Gisborne* ii. 343.

"Persons in health have died from the expectation of dying. It was once common for those who perished by violence to summon their destroyers to appear, within a stated time, before the tribunal of their God: and we have many perfectly attested instances in which, through fear and remorse, the perpetrators withered under the curse, and died. Pestilence does not kill with the rapidity of terror."—*Wakley.*

*a Baldwin Brown.*

*a* "The alienation of friends and acquaintances is a common topic in Ps. of this kind. Comp. xxxi. 11, lxxxviii. 18." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* 2 Sa. xv. 1—6.

*v.* 13. *J. Hales*, ii. 47.

"The first symptom of approaching death with some is the strong presentiment that they are about to die."—*Wakley.*

*c Rev. J. Hughes.*

*a* "Dav. may be giving the reason for his silence. He feared lest, by some injudicious answer, he might give occasion to his ene-

mies, who had already triumphed when he made a false step. Ps. xxxix. 1, 2." — *Spk. Com.*

*v.* 18. *Abp. Tillotson*, ix. 79; *Dr. W. Sherlock*, ii. 77; *A. W. Hare*, ii. 135; *Lord A. Hervey*, i. 191.

One dying said, "I cannot see the darkness of the valley, because of His brightness."

*a Spk. Com.*

Ex. xv. 2; Ps. xxiv. 5, xxvii. 1; Is. xii. 2, etc.

The first hospital for the reception of the diseased and the infirm was founded at Edessa, in Syria, by the sagacious and provident humanity of a Christian father.

author,— David

*Prayer of one much tried by the prosperity of the ungodly.*

*Jeduthun*, either the same as Ethan, a leading singer, or the title of a tune.

*a* The expression includes the idea of submission; the silence of resignation.

*b Alpha* in 400 Mss.; *Erasmus, Op.* v. 417; *Abp. Leighton*, ii. 553.

*v.* 1. *Dr. E. Bouverie*, 187; *Dr. R. Fiddes*, i. 121; *Dr. J. Grant*, 102; *Dr. W. B. Collyer*, 424.

American forests, heard the voice of a youth, and turned his horse in the direction from whence the sound proceeded. No one could he see, but he heard the prayer, "O Lord, lookee down, see poor nigger; him heart as black as skin. Dear Lord Jesus came all way down from heaven to save poor sinner. O save poor nigger." Here the horse made a noise, and frightened the poor black boy, who cried, "Oh, no whippee poor nigger!" Mr. Smith then said, "What are you doing?" The slave answered, "Praying to God." Mr. Smith asked, "What for?" The slave replied, "Me poor nigger—sinner—black heart—black as skin, me come to wood to pray God save me." Mr. Smith encouraged him by saying, "Boy, I pray to the same God, and will pray with you." The slave, falling flat upon his face, cried out, "Oh, do massa, and kneel upon poor nigger!" The gentleman alighted from his horse and knelt by the side of the poor slave, while they prayed together to Him "who giveth to all life, and breath, and all things; and hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth."

19—22. (19) **lively,** *Heb.* living and strong. Read the sentence, "But those that are causelessly mine enemies are strong." (20) **evil for good,** turn against Dav. though he had been kind to them. (21, 22) **my salvation,** "note the development of the evidence; first prayer, then confidence in God's knowledge, then hope, then assurance of salvation in God."[a]

*Matthew Hale's enemy.*—A person who had done Sir Matthew Hale a great injury, came afterwards to him for his advice in the settlement of his estate. Sir Matthew gave his advice very frankly to him, but would accept of no fee for it. When he was asked how he could use a man so kindly who had wronged him so much, his answer was, he thanked God he had learned to forgive injuries.

## *PSALM THE THIRTY-NINTH.*

1—3. **I said,** *i.e.* thought to myself; formed the resolution. **with my tongue,** by murmuring at the Div. dispensation under which he suffered. **bridle,** or muzzle. (2) **even from good,**[a] or without gaining any good thereby. (3) **hot,** with holding back the expression of earnest feeling. He speaks however at last to God, not to his adversaries.

*The government of the tongue* (*v.* 1).—I. The evil resolved against. 1. How the tongue may sin by profane speeches, by uncharitable speeches, by false and lying speeches, by unchaste speeches: 2. The parties against whom it sins—God, our neighbours, our own souls. II. The resolution formed for the prevention of this evil. We must take heed—1. To our past ways with penitent recollection; 2. To our present ways with serious consideration; 3. To our future ways with firm and pious purpose. Apply:—(1) Hereby others will be edified; (2) The comforts of your own souls will be improved; (3) God will be honoured.[b]

*Dying silent.*—In the last visit but one which Whitefield paid to America, he spent a day or two at Princeton, under the roof of Dr. Finley, then president of the college at that place. At dinner, the doctor said, "Mr. W., I hope it will be very long before you will be called home; but when that event shall

arrive, I shall be glad to hear the noble testimony you will bear for God." "You would be disappointed, doctor," said W., "I shall die silent. It has pleased God to enable me to bear so many testimonies for Him during my life, that He will require none from me when I die." The manner of W.'s death verified his prediction.

4—8. (4) **mine end**, how near I am to death,[a] comp. Ps. xc. 12. (5) **handbreadth**, Matt. vi. 27. **best state**, or at his standing fast, however firmly established he may be. **vanity**, or a mere *breath*. (6) **vain shew**, as a shadow, an unsubstantial form.[b] (7) **now**, taking all these things into consideration. (8) **transgressions**, his own sins were far more serious things than his enemies: therefore he prays first for redemption from them.[c]

*Hope centred in God* (*v.* 7).—I. There is nothing in this world worthy the expectation of our souls, as to constitute their happiness. 1. All things here are uncertain; 2. They are unsatisfying. II. Our hopes should be placed on God entirely as the author of our felicity. 1. There is enough in God to fill our most enlarged expectations; 2. God is willing to grant us all the happiness we can possibly desire in and from Him.[d]

*The rich man and his son.*—An old woman, who showed the house and pictures at Towcester, expressed herself in these remarkable words:—"That is Sir Robert Farmer; he lived in the country, took care of his estate, built this house, and paid for it; managed well, saved money, and died rich. *That* is his son. He was made a lord, took a place at court, spent his estate, and died a beggar!" A very concise but full account, and fraught with a valuable moral lesson: "He layeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them."

9—13. (9) **dumb**, recognising the justice of his sufferings, as Divine chastisement. (10) **blow**, *lit.* conflict or quarrel.[a] (11) **his beauty**, *etc.*, "Thou makest his beauty melt away, like the damage of the moth!"[b] (12) **stranger**, Gen. xxiii. 4.[c] (13) **recover strength**, "brighten up again, like the morning, with a smiling gleam of light on my countenance."[d]

*Submission to God* (*v.* 9).—This language is suited to—I. A gracious soul under a sense of guilt. II. To one visited with a providential reverse of circumstances. III. Or under oppression. IV. Or one arrested by disease. V. Or when God takes away the delight of his eyes. Conclude with three general hints:—1. The text shows us the right state of mind under bereaving providences; 2. That there is a school for God's children; 3. That God has appointed a present silence to be the harbinger of future praise.[e]

*The decline of life.*—So have I seen a rose newly springing from the clefts of its hood, and at first it was fair as the morning, and full with the dew of heaven, as a lamb's fleece; but when a ruder breath has forced open its virgin modesty, and dismantled its too youthful and unripe retirement, it began to put on darkness, and to decline to softness and the symptoms of a sickly age; it bowed the head, and broke its stalk; and at night, having lost some of its leaves, and all its beauty, it fell into the portion of weeds and out-worn faces. The same is the portion of every man and every woman; the heritage of worms

[a] He who is left to himself has many difficulties to struggle with; but he who is saved every struggle is in a still more unfortunate position.

*a* "Make me rightly to know and estimate the shortness and uncertainty of human life, that so, instead of suffering myself to be perplexed with all that I see around me, I may cast myself the more entirely on Thee."—*Peroune.*

*b* Ps. lxxiii. 20.

*c* Ps. xxxii. 1.

*d* *T. Gibbons, M.A.*

*v.* 4. *Bp. Bull*, i. 472; *Dr. R. Warren*, iii. 381; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, i. 40.

*vv.* 4, 5. *Dr. H. Hunter*, i. 321.

"Ills that never happened have chiefly made men wretched."—*Tupper.*

*a* "We may render, 'I am worn out with resisting Thy chastisement.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* *Delitzsch.*

Job xiii. 28.

*c* 1 Chr. xxix. 15.

*d* *Wordsworth.*

See Job vii. 19, x. 20, 21.

*e* *R. Cecil, M.A.*

*v.* 9. *Dr. W. Sherlock*, i. 184; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, iv. 46.

*v.* 10. *Abp. Secker*, v. 237.

*v.* 11. *Dr. B. Whichcote*, i. 113.

*v.* 12. *Dr. E. Boys*, 235; *Dr. S. Charters*, ii. 314.

and serpents, rottenness and cold dishonour, and our beauty so changed, that our acquaintance quickly know us not; and that change mingled with so much horror, or else meets so with our fears and weak discoursings, that they who, six hours ago, tended upon us either with charitable or ambitious services, cannot without some regret, stay in the room alone, where the body lies stripped of its life and honour.*f*

vv. 12, 13. *Bp. Lake.*

*f Jeremy Taylor.*

author,—prob. David

*Subject, Thanksgiving and self-dedication.*

## *PSALM THE FORTIETH.*

1—5. (1) patiently, Heb. *in waiting I waited;* expressing the intense feeling of expectation.*a* (2) horrible pit, lit. *the pit of turmoil*, or destruction.*b* miry clay, *mire of mud*, Ps. lxix. 2. established, *etc.*, or, made my footsteps firm. (3) new song,*c* one freshly started by some new deliverances. (4) respecteth not, *turneth not to:* the word generally used of apostasy. proud, so are called his high-handed enemies; such *e.g.* as Absalom's faction. lies, lying apostates, "either men who have forsaken the faith, or have broken their oaths of allegiance.*d* (5) reckoned, *i.e.* they are innumerable.*e*

*Sinking but trusting* (*v.* 1).—I. The patience we should exercise: no insensibility, or stubborn in action, or ease, or sloth. II. Some causes why it is not exercised. 1. Latent scepticism; 2. Self-reproach; 3. Self-confidence; 4. Weariness. III. Some reasons why we should exercise it. 1. The experience of all saints attests its desirability; 2. Our own utter inability; 3. The example of Jesus; 4. Our knowledge of the goodness of God.*f*

*The Rev. Hansard Knollys* (*v.* 4).—This worthy man was among the Christian ministers who, in the seventeenth century, were the subjects of persecution. He was persecuted in the High Commission Court, and fled to America; from whence after a time he returned. Having lived for some time in obscurity in London, he had but sixpence left, and no prospect of being able to provide for the support of his family. In these circumstances he prayed, encouraged his wife to remember the past goodness of God, and to reflect on the promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," paid his lodging, and then went out, not knowing where the providence of God would lead him to seek the means of subsistence. He had walked but a few steps, when he was met by a woman, who told him that some Christian friends had prepared a residence for him and his family, and had sent him money and other comforts. They were impressed with this manifestation of Divine goodness to them, and his wife exclaimed, "Oh! dear husband, how sweet it is to live by faith, and trust God's faithful word! Let us rely upon Him whilst we live, and trust Him in all straits."*g*—*Revelation not a system.*—No uniform or regular system of theology is here to be found; and better, perhaps, it had been if less labour had been employed by the learned to bend and twist these Divine materials into the polished forms of human systems, to which they never will submit, and for which they were never intended by their Great Author. Why He chose not to leave any such behind Him we know not, but it might possibly be because He knew that the imperfection of man was incapable of receiving such a system, and that we are more properly and more safely conducted by the distant and

*a* Compare Ps. xxvii. 14, xxxvii. 7.

*b* "The metaphor of the pit may be used either with reference to a pitfall for wild beasts, or a dungeon, such as that into which Jeremiah was cast (Jer. xxxviii. 6), and which would often have a damp and miry bottom." — *Perowne.*

*c* Ps. xxxiii. 3.

*d Spk. Com.*

*e* LXX., Vulg., *Delitzsch*, etc., render, "Nothing can be compared unto Thee."

vv. 1—3. *F. Close*, i. 410; *Dr. J. Morison, Sers.*

*f Stems and Twigs.*

"George Creedy went into the battle of Whiteoak Swamp with a Testament in his pocket. A Minie-ball shattered his arm, then struck the Testament, splitting it; and was thereby diverted from its course, and the soldier's life saved. How often has the Testament turned the missiles of death from the exposed soul!

*g R. T. S.*

scattered rays than by the too powerful sunshine of Divine illumination. "If I have told you earthly things," says He, "and ye believed not, how shall ye believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" That is, If My instructions concerning your behaviour in the present as relative to a future life are so difficult to be understood that you can scarcely believe Me, how shall you believe if I endeavoured to explain to you the nature of celestial beings, the designs of Providence, and the mysteries of His dispensations—subjects which you have neither ideas to comprehend, nor language to express.[h]

**6, 7.** (6) **sacrifice . . not,**[a] 1 Sa. xv. 22. **mine ears,** *etc.*,[b] lit. *ears hast thou dug out for me.* The meaning is, that by God's deliverances he had been brought to a right mind, and made attentive to God's will. *See* He. x. 5. To him was given "the hearing ear." The supposed reference to boring a servant's ear cannot be sustained. **burnt . . offering,** all the four kinds of offering provided for in the Jewish system are included in this verse. (7) **volume of the book,** or roll; ancient volumes were in the form of scrolls, or rolls.[c]

*Life results of God's inward revelation to man* (*v.* 6).—I. A profound conviction of the spirituality of religion. 1. This result is rational; 2. Testing. II. A personal consecration to the Divine will. 1. This is voluntary; 2. Orderly; 3. Joyous. III. A faithful declaration of God's character. He declared—1. His rectitude; 2. His fidelity; 3. Merciful interposition; 4. Goodness; 5. Revelation.[d]

*Delight in the law of God* (*v.* 8).—The Christian man consents to the law, that it is righteous, and justifies God in the law, for he affirms that God is righteous and just, who is the Author of the law. He believes the promises of God, and justifies God, judging Him true, and believing that He will fulfil all His promises. With the law he condemns himself and all his deeds, and gives all the praise to God. He believes the promises, and ascribes all truth to God; thus, everywhere he justifies God, and praises God.[e]—*The Caffre converted.*—A Caffre, a fine, tall, athletic young man, addicted to all the debasing and demoralising customs of his nation, but who had occasionally attended public worship, one night resolved to go into the colony of Chumie for the purpose of stealing a horse, which is a common practice with them. He immediately left home, came into the colony, and watched for an opportunity of accomplishing his purpose, which soon presented itself. He found two horses grazing in a sheltered situation near a bush, and he instantly seized one of them, and made off with it as fast as he could. Elated with his success, and rejoicing in the prospect of securing his prize without being detected, he proceeded towards Caffreland, when all at once the thought struck him, "Thou shalt not steal." He could go no further, but immediately drew up the horse, and said to himself, "What is this? I have heard these words before, in the church, but I never felt as I do now. This must be the word of God." He dismounted, and held the bridle in his hand, hesitating whether to go forward with the horse, or to return with it and restore it to the owner. In this state he continued for upwards of an hour. At last he resolved to take the horse back again, which he accordingly did, and returned home a true penitent, determined to serve God. When he reached his

Lay down the arms of your resistance, and close with God in Christ on His own terms. "Let the potsherd of earth strive with the potsherd of earth. Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker!

*h Soame Jenyns.*

*a* Ps. li. 16, 17, lxix. 30, 31; Is. i. 11; Jer. vii. 21—23; Ho. vi. 6; Mi. vi. 6—8.

*b* "Thou hast given me capacity for hearing and obeying Thy law; a more valuable service than the mere offering of sacrifices."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c Ewald* would read this clause, "Behold I come *with* the volume of a book written," etc.

*v.* 6. *J. Mede, Wks.* ii.

*vv.* 6—8. *A. Fuller, Wks.* 579; *E. Irving*, 1.

*v.* 7. *R. Erskine*, vi. 57.

*d Dr. Thomas.*

*e W. Tindal* (1530).

Salvation is placed by the side of a believing look. "Look unto Me, and be ye saved." Can we have salvation on easier terms?

"It is more necessary to be saved than to be; better not to be than to have a being in hell."—*Gurnall.*

A highly esteemed young man was rescued from the water, and appeared to be dead. At length he began to show signs of life; and a thrill of joy ran through the

crowd as it was whispered around. "He breathes!" How much greater the joy of men and angels over newly-born souls! "Repentance clothes in grass and flowers the grave in which the past is laid." —*Sterling.*

dwelling he could not rest; sleep had departed from him; the sting of conviction abided deep in his conscience, and he could not shake it off. The next day he took an ox out of his kraal (cattle place), and went to the nearest village to sell it, in order that he might buy European clothing with the money, and attend the house of God like a Christian. When he returned with his clothes he went to the minister's house, and told him all that had taken place, and requested to be admitted on probation as a church member. The minister, cheered with his statement, received him: and after keeping him on trial the appointed time, and finding him consistent in his conduct, a short time ago baptised him; and he is now a full member of the Christian Church, and adorning his profession.

8—12. (8) **delight**, find personal pleasure in it. Religion must be more than formal doing of duties if it is to be acceptable to God.[a] **within my heart**, lit. *in the midst of my bowels*, as the seat of the affections. (9, 10) **have preached**, *etc.*, "words are heaped on words to express the eager forwardness of a heart burning to show forth its gratitude."[b] (11) **withhold**, *etc.*, with this *v.* the tone of the Ps. changes to prayer. (12) **iniquities**, these, rather than external troubles, most deeply distress him.[c]

*The hold of sin* (*v.* 12).—Sin takes hold of men—I. By its power. Prov. v. 22. II. By an accusing conscience. III. By its evil consequences.[d]

*The Bible the rule of action.*—It is written of Boleslaus, one of the kings of Poland, that he carried about him the picture of his father, and when he was to do any great work, or set upon any design extraordinary, he would look on the picture, and pray that he might do nothing unworthy of such a father's name. Thus it is that the Scriptures are the picture of God's will, and therein drawn out to the very life; before a man enters upon or engages himself in any business whatsoever, let him look there, and read there what is to be done, what to be undone: and what God commands, let that be done, and what He forbids, let that be undone.

13—17. (13) **be pleased**, *etc.*, see Ps. lxx. (14) **ashamed**, *etc.*, Ps. xxxv. 4, 5. **backward**, as a routed army. (15) **aha**, *see* Ps. xxxv. 21. (16) **magnified**, extolled, spoken highly of. (17) **poor and needy**, afflicted and poor. **the Lord thinketh**, better, *may the Lord think upon me.* **no tarrying**, "the last word is a deep sigh."

*Man's hope in need* (*v.* 17).—I. Human wretchedness. We may admit the grandeur of man. Cannot deny the sorrow, etc., of life. II. Divine thoughtfulness, which indicates—1. Divine condescension; 2. Divine estimates; 2. Divine provision.[a]

*The cruelty of persecutors.*—In the St. Bartholomew massacre, at Vassy, when any of the victims desired to have mercy shown them for the love of Jesus, the murderers would say, "You use the name of Christ; but where is your Christ now?" So in the massacre of the prisoners at Trois. "Where is now your God?" cried the demons; "what has become of all your prayers and psalms now? Let your God, whom you call upon, save you if He can." Some of the wretches sung in scorn to their victims these words: "Judge me, O God, and plead my cause;" while

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a "Personal and not ritualistic sacrifices are what God delights in." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b Perowne.*

*c* "This passage was applied by the Fathers, esp. by Augustine, to our Saviour, as bearing the sins of the Church, of wh. He is at once the Head and Representative. Ps. xxxviii. 4, lxv. 3, lxix. 5, lxxiii. 26." —*Spk. Com.*

*vv.* 7, 8. *C. Marriott*, i. 152; *H. Vaughan*, 295, 305.

*v.* 8. *J. Flavel, Wks.* 6.

*vv.* 11—13. *Bp. Wordsworth*, 159.

*v.* 12. *G. W. Woodhouse*, ii. 81. *d J. Wolfendale.*

*a W. Burrowes, B.A.*

*v.* 15. *Dr. W. Paley*, i. 37.

*v.* 17. *W. Jay*, iv. 250.

"Remorse is a man's dread prerogative, and is the natural accompaniment of his constitution as a knowing, voluntary agent, left in trust with his own welfare and that of others. Remorse, if we exclude the notion of responsibility, is an enigma in human

others, beating them, cried, "Sing now, 'Have mercy on me, O God.'"

## PSALM THE FORTY-FIRST.

1—3. (1) **considereth**, with "the kindness of a man who does not misinterpret the affliction."[a] **poor**, in sense of affliction, not of poverty.[b] Used generally of those "afflicted in mind, body, or estate." (2) **thou wilt not**, better as marg. *do not thou*. (3) **bed of languishing**, a part at least of the Psalmist's trouble was a severe illness, which was interpreted to his injury. **make . . bed**, "all his couch dost Thou turn when he falleth sick;"[c] turn from a couch of sickness to one of health.

*Treatment of afflicted man* (*v.* 1).—I. The right treatment of afflicted man. 1. Its nature: considereth; 2. Its happiness: mercy twice blessed. II. The wrong treatment of afflicted man. 1. Under it he had a consciousness of his sins; 2. He deeply felt the wicked conduct of his enemies; 3. He directs his heart to the great God.[d]

*The three pillows* (*v.* 3).—When I visited one day, as he was dying, my beloved friend Benjamin Parsons, I said, "How are you to-day, sir?" he said, "My head is resting very sweetly on three pillows—infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom." Preaching in the Canterbury Hall in Brighton, I mentioned this some time since; and many months after, I was requested to call upon a poor but holy young women, apparently dying. She said, "I felt I must see you before I died; I heard you tell the story of Benjamin Parsons and his three pillows; and when I went through a surgical operation, and it was very cruel, I was leaning my head on pillows, and as they were taking them away, I said, 'Mayn't I keep them?' The surgeon said, 'No, my dear, we must take them away.' 'But,' said I, 'you can't take away Benjamin Parsons' three pillows; I can lay my head on infinite power, infinite love, and infinite wisdom.'"[e]

4—6. (4) **I said**, in the Heb. I is emphatic, *I for my part*. The poet turns from the compassionate man to give expression to his own feelings. **sinned**, *etc.*, before God the Psalmist recognises the reason of his sufferings, but he mourns over the treatment received from his fellow-men. (5) **when . . perish**, they were watching anxiously for a fatal termination of the disease. (6) **come to see me**, allusion is distinctly made to some individual; we can only suppose he refers to Ahithophel. **vanity**,[a] hypocritical expressions of condolence.

*Confession of sin* (*v.* 4).—This confession has been made by—I. The hardened sinner,—Pharaoh. II. The double-minded man,—Balaam. III. The insincere man,—Saul. IV. The doubtful penitent,—Achan. V. By the despairing man,—Judas. VI. By the saint,—Job. VII. By the prodigal.[b]

*Relief in prayer*.—It is some consolation, it is some relief, to open our hearts to men, and tell our sorrows to a friend, who can give us no relief but by mingling his tears with ours. What consolation, what relief will it then give to open our hearts, and tell our sorrows to that Friend above, who is ever gracious to hear, and ever mighty to save! To that Friend who never fails, who is afflicted in all our afflictions, and who keeps us as the nature, never to be explained."—*Isaac Taylor*.

author,—David

*Complaint of treacherous friends, such as Ahithophel.*

*a Spk. Com.*

*b* "The word is one of wide meaning, and is used of the poor (Ex. xxx. 15); of the lean and weak in body (Ge. xli. 19); of the sick in mind (2 Sa. xiii. 4)."—*Perowne.*

*c Delitzsch.*

"Thou wilt soon, when he is sick, turn all his being bedridden (into health)."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 1. *Dr. M. Hole*, iv. 166; *Bp Horne*, iii. 237; *W. Jones*, vi 208; *Dr. T. Chalmers*, xi. 283. *vv.* 1—3. *Dr. P. Doddridge*, iii. 98; *Bp. Warburton*, x. 239.

*d Dr. D. Thomas.*

*e Paxton Hood.*

*a* "He pretends friendship, and that his errand is to mourn with me, and to comfort me; he tells me he is very sorry to see me so indisposed, and wishes me my health; but it is all flattery and falsehood."—*Matt. Henry.*

*v.* 4. *Dr. Ibbot*, ii. 104.

*b C. H. Spurgeon.*

Many have been the definitions and descriptions of salvation; but "the one thing needful" is the plainest and best. The world,

though tossed to and fro upon a sea of danger yet never seems to cast its eye on the shore of safety: "Ye will not come unto Me that ye might have life."

*c J. Logan* (1768).

Three little boys were playing on a high point of the sea-shore. The tide flowing in, they were surrounded by water, and unable to escape. A fisherman discovered their situation, and rescued them just as the water reached to their necks. He was the boys' saviour.

"The difference between true and false repentance is as great as that between the running of water in the paths after a violent shower and the streams which flow forth from a living fountain."—*Vena.*

*d R. T. S.*

"apple of the eye!" Art thou, therefore, oppressed with the calamities of life, is thy head bowed down with trouble, or thy heart broken with sorrow? Approach to the altar, go to God, present to Him the prayer of thy heart, and He will send help to thee from His holy hill.—*An American lady.*—The Rev. Dr. Mason, of New York, was some years since requested to visit a lady in dying circumstances, who, together with her husband, openly avowed infidel principles, though they attended on his ministry. On approaching her bedside, he asked her if she felt herself a sinner and perceived the need of a Saviour. She frankly told him she did not: and that she wholly disbelieved the doctrine of a Mediator. "Then," said the doctor, "I have no consolation for you: not one word of comfort. There is not a single passage in the Bible that warrants me to speak peace to any one who rejects the Mediator provided for lost sinners. You must abide the consequences of your infidelity." Saying that, he was on the point of leaving the room, when some one said, "Well but, Doctor, if you cannot speak consolation to her, you can pray for her." To this he assented, and kneeling down by the bedside, prayed for her as a guilty sinner, just sinking into hell; and then arising from his knees left the house. A day or two after, he received a letter from the lady herself, earnestly desiring that he would come and see her without delay. He immediately obeyed the summons; but what was his amazement, when, on entering the room, she held out her hand to him, and said, with a benignant smile, "It is all true; all that you said on Sunday is true! I have seen myself the wretched sinner which you described me to be in prayer. I have seen Christ that all-sufficient Saviour you said He was; and God has mercifully snatched me from the abyss of infidelity in which I was sunk, and placed me on the Rock of ages. There I am secure: there I shall remain. I know in whom I have believed." All this was like a dream to him; but she proceeded, and displayed as accurate a knowledge of the way of salvation revealed in the Gospel, and as firm a reliance on it, as if she had been a disciple of Christ for many years. Yet there was nothing like boasting or presumption—all was humility, resignation, and confidence. She charged her husband to educate their daughter in the fear of God, and above all to keep from her those novels and books of infidel sentimentality, by which she had been nearly brought to ruin. On the evening of the same day she expired, in fulness of joy and peace in believing.[d]

7—9. (7) whisper,[a] "whisperers and backbiters are put together among the worst of sinners," Ro. i. 29, 30. (8) evil disease, lit. *a thing of Belial*, something dishonourable: a punishment which comes for evil doing. cleaveth, lit. *is poured out on him*, or *smelted into him*. rise no more, never get up from this sick bed.[b] (9) own . . friend, lit. *man of my peace*.[c] eat of my bread, so was in close and honoured association.[d] lifted . . me, Heb. *made great his heel*, lifted it to trample me down.

*Escape from persecutors.*—During the awful massacre at Paris, by which so many Christians were removed from the present world, the celebrated Moulin crept into an oven, over the mouth of which a spider instantly wove its web: so that when the enemies of the Christians inspected the premises, they passed by

*a* "The Heb. is singularly graphic; it describes the enemies in a group whispering to each other, laying plots against the king; he seems to see them standing round his chamber, if not in his very presence."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* "He is utterly undone and our victory is sure."—*Bunsset.*

*c* Jer. xx. 10, marg.

*d* "The Oriental feeling as to the sacredness of hospitality would stamp

the oven with the remark that no one could have been there for some days. So easily can the blessed God devise means for the safety of His servants!

10—13. (10) requite them,[a] apart from personal feeling it was a *king's* duty not only to repress revolt but also to punish the conspirators. (11) doth not, will not.[b] (12) before thy face, so in thine acceptance. (13) blessed, *etc.*, "a later doxology appended, when the Pss. were collected, in order to mark the conclusion of the First Book."

*The strength of faith.*—Faith makes use of things past as if they were present. It makes use of God's mercies to our forefathers: thus the Church makes use of the mercy of God to Jacob when he wrestled with Him and prevailed, as if it were a present mercy to themselves. Faith makes use of all the promises God hath made to His people; yea, it fetches out the comfort of those promises, as if they were made now to us. Faith makes use of God's former dealings with ourselves: when all sense of God's mercies fails, when God seems to be as an enemy, faith will fetch life from His former mercies. Now, in this work of faith what abundance of strength doth it bring in, from former mercies—former promises—former dealings.[c]

## *PSALM THE FORTY-SECOND.*

1—3. (1) hart, or hind, as the female is referred to. panteth, Syr. *brayeth*, as if a peculiar cry of the thirsty animal were intended.[a] The word is only found again in Joel i. 20. water-brooks, or water-courses.[b] (2) living God, as the source and sustainer of all life.[c] before God, as required by the Mosaic law, Ex. xxiii. 17, xxxiv. 23. In the sanctuary God's presence was peculiarly manifested. (3) my meat, my daily portion, like my daily meal. where . . God? the bitterest of all taunts to the godly man. He is mocked as one forsaken by the God in whom he trusted: 2 Sa. xvi. 5—8.

*The personality of God* (*v.* 2).—I. The proof of the personality of God—1. From our own personality; 2. From our instinctive thoughts at critical times; 3. From the testimony of Scripture; 4. From the incarnation. II. The consequences of denying the personality of God. 1. We must deny the work of the great Creator; 2. Also the distinction between right and wrong; 3. And the duty of prayer; 4. And our own immortality.[d]

*The hart* (*v.* 1).—"On the eastern frontiers of Syria are several places allotted for the hunting of gazelles: an open space in the plain, of about one mile and a half square, is enclosed on three sides by a wall of loose stones, too high for the gazelles to leap over. In different parts of this wall gaps are purposely left, and near each gap a deep ditch is made on the outside. The enclosed space is situated near some rivulet or spring, to which in summer the gazelles resort. When the hunting is to begin, many peasants assemble and watch till they see a herd of gazelles advancing from a distance towards the enclosure, into which they drive them: the gazelles, frightened by the shouts of these people, and the discharge of firearms, endeavour to leap over the wall, but they can only effect this at the gaps, where they fall into the ditch outside, and are easily taken, sometimes by hun-

such conduct with peculiar blackness." — *Perowne.*

*a* "Such a wish cannot be reconciled with our better Christian conscience." — *Perowne.*

*b* "The expression in this *v.*, "*thou favourest me*," is characteristic of David. See Ps. xviii. 19, xxii. 8, xxxv. 27; 2 Sa. xv. 26.

*c* *I. Ambrose* (1658).

author,— prob. David

*Subject, the longings of an exile.*

*Maschil*, see title of Ps. xxxii.

*a* *Kay.* "Not merely a quiet languishing, but a strong, audible thirsting or panting for water, caused by prevailing drought." — *Delitzsch.*

*b* "The gazelle is constantly found resorting to the rocky ravines (on both sides of the Jordan) in quest, doubtless, of the pools of water left here and there by the winter torrents." —*Wilton.*

*c* "Probably not without reference to the expression, 'living waters,' the quickening and restorative streams for wh. the thirsty soul longeth." — *Spk. Com.*

*d* *G. Brooks.*

De. v. 26; Jos. iii. 10; 1 Sa. xvii. 26; 2 Ki. xix. 4; Ps. lxxxiv. 2; Ho. i. 10; 1 Thes. i. 9.
*e Burckhardt.*

*a* "In such a recollection there would be mingled feelings of bitterness and consolation. No doubt the thought of those happy days in which he had travelled with the festal caravan to the holy city would make him feel more intensely his present loneliness." —*Perowne.*
*b* "He distinguishes between the actual Ego and the afflicted spirit." — *Delitzsch.*
*c* Ex. xxiii. 14.
*d* Matt. xxvi. 38; Jno. xii. 27.
*e F. W. Robertson.*
*v.* 4. *E. Butcher,* 275.
*v.* 5. *Dr. N. Marshall, id.* 306; *G. Whitefield,* 722; *Dr. V. Knox,* vi. 15.
*f G. Brooks.*

*a* "To which David had been driven from Jerus. by Absalom his son. See 2 Sa. xvii. 22."—*Wordsworth.*
*b* "From Mizar the poet looks longingly towards the district round about his home, and just as there, in a strange land, the wild waters of the awe-inspiring mountains roar around him, there seems to be a corresponding tumult in his soul.... He feels as though all these threatening masses of water were rolling like so many waves of misfortune over

dreds. The chief of the herd always leaps first, the others follow him one by one. The gazelles thus taken are immediately killed, and their flesh sold to the Arabs. Of the gazelle's skin a kind of parchment is made, used in covering the small drum with which the Syrians accompany some musical instrument, or the voice."*a*

4, 5. (4) when, *etc.*, better rendered, "these things I remember." and etc.*a* in me, or upon me.*b* multitude, throng of pilgrims going to the feasts. went with them, *Heb.* went slowly, as those in a procession. kept holyday, or keeping festival.*c* (5) cast down, utterly prostrate.*d* O my soul, appeal to the higher spiritual principle in him. disquieted, or *why moanest thou over me?* hope thou, "distinguish bet. the *feelings* of faith that God is present, and the *hope* of faith that He will be so."*e*

*Present sorrow, past joy* (*v.* 4).—I. The pleasures the Psalmist remembered. They were connected with—1. The society he cultivated; 2. The day he observed; 3. The place he frequented; 4. The exercises in which he engaged. II. The sorrow he experienced. 1. Its occasion was the loss of religious privileges; 2. Its measure was the sensibility of the soul; 3. Its expression was the language of prayer.*f*

*God present in trouble.*—The Rev. Thomas Worts having been ejected, in 1662, from the church of Burningham, Norfolk, afterwards became pastor of a congregation at Guestwick, in the same county. He was brought from Burningham into Norwich, with a sort of brutal triumph, his legs being chained under the horse's belly. As he was conducted to the castle, a woman, looking from a chamber window near the gate through which he passed, called out, in contempt and derision, "Worts, where is now your God?" The good confessor desired her to turn to Micah vii. 10. She did so, and was so struck with the passage that she became a kind friend to him in his long confinement.

6—8. (6) land of Jordan, country district east of Jordan.*a* of the Hermonites, *lit.* of the Hermons: either the two characteristic peaks, or the mountain range in the N.E. beyond Jordan. Mizar, a hill of this range, not precisely identified. (7) deep . . over me, fig. taken fr. times of storm to represent the inner conflict through which the Psalmist was passing.*b* waterspouts, cataracts, or waterfalls. (8) command, send His loving-kindness, as a heavenly messenger.

*Despondency* (*v.* 6).—The soul is often cast down—I. By bodily disease. II. By apparent declension in religion. III. By the recurrence of vain thoughts. IV. By the consciousness of some sin. V. By the dread of everlasting exclusion from the presence of God. VI. By the pressure of adversity.*c*

*Remember Torwood* (*v.* 6).—Mr. Kidd, when minister of Queensferry, a few miles from Edinburgh, was one day very much depressed and discouraged for want of that comfort which is produced by the faith of the Gospel alone. He sent a note to Mr L., minister of Culross, a few miles off, informing him of his distress of mind, and desiring a visit as soon as possible. Mr. L. told the servant he was so busy that he could not wait upon his master, but desired him to tell Mr. K. to remember Torwood! When the servant returned, he said to his master: "Mr. L. could

not come, but he desired me to tell you to remember Torwood!" This answer immediately struck Mr. K., and he cried out, "Yes, Lord! I will remember Thee, from the hill Mizar, and from the Hermonites!" All his troubles and darkness vanished upon the recollection of a day which he had formerly spent in prayer along with Mr. L. in Torwood, where he had enjoyed eminent communion with God.

9—11. (9) my rock, or steep cliff, high above the swirling waters.[a] mourning, *lit.* black, clad in mourning raiment. (10) with a sword, or *with a crushing.*[b] (11) why, *etc.*, see *v.* 5.

*Cheer up* (*v.* 11).—I. The causes of spiritual despondency. 1. The burden of sin; 2. The wickedness of the world; 3. Earthly misfortunes; 4. Bereavements. II. The cure of despondency. 1. A present trust in God; 2. Looking to the future. III. The reasons for trust in God. 1. His present goodness to us; 2. His revealed relation to us.[c]

*Note on Psa. xlii.*—The date and authorship of this Psalm are uncertain; but the place is beyond doubt the trans-Jordanic hills, which always behold, as they are always beheld from, Western Palestine. As before the eye of the exile the "gazelle" of the forests of Gilead panted after the fresh streams of water which thence descended to the Jordan, so his soul panted after God, from whose outward presence he was shut out. The river, with its winding rapids, "deep calling to deep," lay beneath him and his home. All that he could now do was to remember the past as he stood in the land of Jordan, as he saw the peaks of Hermon, as he found himself on the eastern heights of Mizar, which reminded him of his banishment and solitude.[d]

## *PSALM THE FORTY-THIRD.*

1—5. (1) judge me, Psalmist asks judgment in the confidence that it will issue in his vindication.[a] deceitful . . man, poss. Ahithophel, whose false friendship grieved David so greatly. (2) God of my strength, who art the source of my strength. (3) light and truth, there may be an allusion to the Urim and Thummim, as the symbol of light and truth.[b] (4) my exceeding joy, source and sustainer of all gladness and bliss. (5) why, *etc.*, Ps. xlii. 5.

*Desiring communion with God* (*vv.* 3, 4).—I. The Psalmist's earnest petition. 1. The subject of his request; 2. Its intention; II. The Psalmist's pious purpose. 1. The object of his devotion; 2. Its fervour; 3. Its manner.[c]

*Howard and the highwayman.*—John Howard, Esq., the eminent philanthropist, always set a very high value on the Sabbaths he spent in England; and during his absence on the Continent he deeply deplored the want of Christian privileges. That he might not increase the labour of his servants, nor prevent their attendance on divine worship, he usually walked to the chapel, where he attended, at Bedford, though at a distance of nearly three miles from his residence. So regularly did he pursue this practice, that an idle and dissolute man, whom he had reproved for his sins, determined to avail himself of this opportunity to waylay and murder him. But Divine Providence remarkably interposed to preserve so valuable a life, by inclining him that

his head."—*Delitzsch.*

*v.* 6. *Bp. Moore*, i. 193.

*vv.* 6, 7. *Abp. J. Sharp*, iii. 1; *J. Clapp*, iii. 83.

*v.* 8. *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 150.

*c G. Brooks.*

*a* Ps. xviii. 2.

*b* "'With a breakage in my bones.' His expression evidently means that the taunts of his adversaries cause him pain like a crushing blow which breaks his very bones."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

Is. xxxviii. 13.

*v.* 11. *N. Brady*, ii. 307; *Dr. R. Moss*, iv. 369; *F. Trench*, 51; *J. Adams*, 93.

*c W. W. Whythe.*

*d Dr. Stanley.*

author,—as previous Psalm, of which this is really a part

*Subject, the cry of the exile to God.*

*a* Ps. vii. 8, xxvi. 1.

*b* "The clause might be paraphrased—Give proof of Thy providential guidance of the true Israelite, and of Thy fidelity to the covenant."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 4. *W. Dunlop*, i. 116; *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, iii. 145; *J. Logan*, 151; *Theodore Parker*, 201; *J. H. Smith*, ii. 176.

*v.* 5. *R. Cecil*, iii. 96.

*c Zeta* in 400 Sks.

morning to go on horseback a different route, by which means his valuable life was prolonged.

## PSALM THE FORTY-FOURTH.

author,—poss. David, more prob. Hezekiah, or a poet of the age of the Maccabees

*A Litany of Israel, when hard pressed by the enemy.*

1—3. (1) fathers have told, as they were enjoined to do.[a] work, *etc.*,[b] comp. Hab. i. 5. (2) plantedst them, *i.e.* our fathers. The fig. is taken fr. planting a vine; Ps. lxxx. the people, *i.e.* the original heathen population. cast them out, better taken as referring to the Israelites, "thou didst spread them out like the branches of a great tree," Ps. lxxx. 9. (3) for, *etc.*, see De. viii. 17; Jos. xxiv. 12.

*God the source of all success* (v. 3).—The passage presents to us the following truths:—I. The co-operation of God secures the success of all right work. II. The spirit of true godliness will acknowledge God's co-operation. III. The recognition of God's co-operation in the work of others is largely useful to ourselves.[c]

*The efficacy of prayer.*—Heine, the well-known physician of Berlin, lost once very heavily by the bankruptcy of a mercantile house. Hufeland met him a few days after, and expressed his sympathy. "I had rather that you had not reminded me of it," he replied; "thank God, I have got over it." "How have you managed that?" "Well, I was unable to forget it; thought upon it night and day. All my money won so painfully, and lost in a moment! Even my poor innocent patients suffered, for my thoughts were wandering. My domestic pleasures vanished: my good wife, otherwise so cheerful, hung her head; we sat opposite each other at table, dumb and sad; our children, that had been so full of joy, looked on with timid fear. I felt that this could not and must not continue. The money was gone, and with it we had lost our peace. I, poor worm of the earth, unable to come out of this distress, took refuge with the Almighty. I hurried to my bedroom, closed the door behind, and fell on my knees to pray with my whole heart, that strength, and courage, and joy, and rest, might be restored to me. Then I felt as if God appeared to me and said, 'Thou art a poor minister's son, and I have blessed thee in thy calling, so that thou art now a famous man. For years I have suffered thee to sport with the money thou hast lost. Have I not the keys of all treasuries? and can I not far more than replace thy loss? Be again of good courage, and promise that thou wilt go joyfully back to thy calling!' And I promised; and wife and children were again cheerful; and I forgot the heaviness. I have got over it, and am once more happy with my God. And prayer has done all this."

4—8. (4) my king, a later mode of thinking concerning God: see the later Ps. lxxiv. 12. Jacob, a later conception of the Jewish nation, Ps. lxxix. 7. (5) push down, the Heb. fig. is taken fr. horned beasts.[a] tread under, as Ps. lx. 12.[b] (6) I will not, the writer now gives his personal feeling as leader in some enterprise, comp. v. 3. (7) thou, Israel's God. (8) in God we boast, expressing present confidence based on experiences of deliverance in the past.

*Alfred the Great* (v. 6).—This distinguished prince, who died in the year 900, was of a most amiable disposition, and, we would hope

*a* Ex. x. 2, xii. 26, 27, xiii. 8, 10; De. vi. 20; Ju. vi. 13.

*b* "A term employed here collectively, gathering up in one the deliverance from Egypt, the guidance through the wilderness, and the settlement in Canaan." — *Perowne.*

*v.* 1. *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 561; *T. Rogers*, ii. 472.

*v.* 3. *J. Tonge*, i. 191.

*c S. Martin.*

"No man can quench his thirst with sand, or with water from the Dead Sea; so no man can find rest from his own character, however good, or from his own acts, however religious." — *Dr. Bonar.*

*a* De. xxxiii. 17.

*b* "Probably in the two words there is latent the conception of a wild beast goring an opponent and trampling him down with his hoofs." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

of genuine piety. During his retreat at Athelney, in Somersetshire, after his defeat by the Danes, a beggar came to his little castle, and requested alms. His queen informed Alfred that they had but one small loaf remaining, which was insufficient for themselves and their friends, who were gone in search of food, though with little hope of success. The king replied, "Give the poor Christian one half of the loaf. He that could feed five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes, can certainly make the half loaf suffice for more than our necessity." The poor man was accordingly relieved, and Alfred's people shortly after returned with a store of fresh provisions.[c]

9—14. (9) hast cast off, the leader's personal confidence is sorely tried by present discouragements. armies, a term implying large armies. (10) turn back, if not defeated, yet unable to accomplish our aims. for themselves, or at their own will.[a] (11) sheep, unable to resist; devoted to slaughter. (12) for nought, without sufficient reason; "for a mere trifle."[b] (13) reproach, Ps. xxxix. 8. (14) byword, or proverb, a common saying.

*Rev. G. Wishart.*—The name of this eminent man is well known in Scotland, where he acted a distinguished part in the reformation of religion, which rendered him a constant object of the hatred of the Popish party. Cardinal Beaton frequently formed plans to take away his life. At one time he procured a letter to be sent to him as from an intimate friend, the laird of Kinnier, in which he was requested to come to him without delay, as he had been seized with sudden illness. In the meantime the cardinal had provided sixty men to waylay him and deprive him of life. The letter having been delivered by a boy, who also brought a horse to convey him on his journey. Wishart set out, but suddenly stopping by the way, avowed to the friends who had accompanied him his strong conviction that God did not will that he should proceed; for that there was treachery in this business. They went forward without him, and discovered the whole plot, by which means his life was preserved.[c]

15—19. (15) my confusion, obs. how the personal and the representative are blended in this Ps. (16) of him, apparently some enemy who was especially insulting. avenger, the enemy now taking his opportunity to avenge former defeats.[a] (17) not forgotten thee, *i.e.* the national distress was not directly connected with national apostasy.[b] (18) steps, or goings. (19) dragons, or jackals; a fig. for a place of desolation, such as would be inhabited by jackals.[c] covered, *etc.*, or "overwhelmed us with deep gloom."

*The joy of believers.*—Happy saints! If all the waves of affliction and rolling billows upon which you are tossed in the troublesome sea of this world set you daily, yea hourly, nearer to the fair haven of everlasting happiness. But, O then, be sure you steer your course by the sacred compass of the Word of God: be daily preparing yourselves by a holy life for a happy death, if you desire to enter into a glorious eternity. In vain shall you long for heaven, if you still live in sin, which is but to walk in the way to hell. Unless the image of God be renewed upon your souls while you are yet on earth, never shall you see the face of God in heaven. Daily crucify your corruptions, exercise your

*v.* 4. *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 462.

*vv.* 7, 8. *Abp. Bramhall* (1645).

*c R. T. S.*

"Who will adhere to him that abandons himself?"—*Sir Philip Sidney.*

*a* "Their enemies rifled them as their prey, at their pleasure, and without any resistance."—*Calvin.*

*b* "There may poss. be a reference to a Heb. father's right to dispose of his children; but it more prob. indicates a feeling that a people so cast off are treated as worthless."—*Spk. Com.*

De. xxxii. 30; Jn. ii. 14, iii. 8, iv. 2, 9.

"Some sinners repent with an unbroken heart. They are sorry, and yet go on as did Pilate and Herod."—*Nevin.*

*c R. T. S.*

*a* See Ps. viii. 2.

*b* "The whole of this very remarkable passage claims for the Israelites not only freedom fr. the old national tendency to idolatry, but thorough sincerity in religion, and consistent integrity of life. The only time at wh. such a description could be used with propriety must have been one of national reformation."—*Spk. Com.*

*c* Jer. ix. 10, x. 22.

graces, perfecting holiness in the fear of God, and so prepare yourselves for heaven. Then may you, with comfort, look for Christ's coming, who will receive you up into His kingdom and glory. True believers love the appearing of Christ.[d]

20—22. (20) stretched . . hands, in the customary attitude of prayer.[a] (21) search, *see* Ps. cxxxix.[b] (22) yea . . slaughter, *see* Ro. viii. 36.

*Perseverance in and through prayer.*—Let us not stagger, let us not faint, let us not give over the combat: but let us stand to it stoutly, fight valiantly, play the man, and let our hearts be comforted, for the Lord will come speedily, and with strong hand break the power of the malicious. For as God exhorteth us to fight, so He helpeth us to overcome. He beholdeth us in the conflict: if we faint, He aideth us: if we overcome, He crowneth us. Therefore, in all temptations, let us have recourse to Him by earnest prayer; that "being strengthened with all might by His glorious power, we may be able to resist in the evil day."[c]—*Stretching out the hands in prayer.*—The stretching out the hands towards an object of devotion, or a holy place, was an ancient usage among Jews and heathens both, and it continues in the East to this time, which continuance I do not remember to have seen remarked. "If," says the Psalmist, "we have forgotten the name of our God, or stretched out our hands to a strange god: shall not God search this out? (Ps. xliv. 20, 21). "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God" (Ps. lxviii. 31). "Hear the voice of my supplications, when I cry unto Thee: when I lift up my hands towards Thy holy oracle" (Ps. xxviii. 2). That this attitude in prayer has continued among the Eastern people appears by the following passages from Pitts, in his account of the religion and manners of the Mohammedans. Speaking of the Algerines throwing wax candles and pots of oil overboard, as a present to some marabbot, or Mohammedan saint, Pitts goes on, and says, "When this is done, they all together hold up their hands, begging the marabbot's blessing, and a prosperous voyage." This they do in common, it seems, when in the Strait's mouth; "and if at any time they happen to be in a very great strait or distress, as being chased, or in a storm, they will gather money, and do likewise." In the same page he tells us the "marabbots have generally a little neat room built over their graves, resembling in figure their mosques or churches, which is very nicely cleaned, and well looked after." And in the succeeding page he tells us, "Many people there are who will scarcely pass by any of them without lifting up their hands and saying some short prayer." He mentions the same devotion again as practised towards a saint that lies buried on the shore of the Red Sea. In like manner he tells us that at quitting the *beet*, or holy house at Mecca, to which they make devout pilgrimages, "they hold up their hands towards the *beet*, making earnest petitions; and then keep going backward till they come to the abovesaid farewell gate. All the way as they retreat, they continue petitioning, holding up their hands, with their eyes fixed on the *beet*, until they are out of sight of it: and so go to their lodgings weeping."[d]

23—26. (23) sleepest thou, Ps. vii. 6, cxxi. 3, 4.[a] (24) forgettest, or dost act as if thou didst forget. (25) belly, *etc.*

*d Willes* (1625).

*a* Ps. xxviii. 2, cxliii. 6.

*b* Compare Job xxxi.

*c C. Richardson* (1612).

"We many times condemn others and therein pass sentence against ourselves: thus Judah said of Tamar, Bring her forth and let her be burnt, not considering that he spake the word against his own soul. Thus David to Nathan, The man that hath done this thing shall die, not considering that he was the man."—*Venning.*

"Repentance begins in the humiliation of the heart, and ends in the reformation of the life."—*Mason.*

"Real repentance consists in the heart being broken for sin and from sin."—*Nevins.*

"There is no going to the fair haven of glory without sailing through the narrow strait of repentance.—*Dyer.*

The way to heaven is by Weeping Cross.

*d Harmer.*

*a* "The sleep of God, a bold metaphor, implies an

strong fig. for a prostrate, grovelling condition. (26) for our help, or, be a help to us.

*God's singular visit.*—It is recorded of Mr. Dod. one of the Puritan ministers, that being one evening late in his study, his mind was strongly inclined, though he could assign no reason for it, to visit a gentleman of his acquaintance, at a very unseasonable hour. Not knowing the design of Providence, he obeyed and went. When he came to the house, after knocking a few times at the door, the gentleman himself came, and inquired if he wanted him upon any particular business. Mr. Dod having answered in the negative, and signified that he could not rest till he had seen him, the gentleman replied, "O, sir, you are sent of God at this very hour, for I was just now going to destroy myself!" and immediately pulled the halter out of his pocket by which he had intended to commit the horrid deed, which was thus prevented.[b]

## *PSALM THE FORTY-FIFTH.*

**1—4.** (1) inditing, *Heb.* boileth or bubbleth up, as an overflowing fountain. good matter, one exciting joyful feelings.[a] the king, first the bridegroom of the poem, then King Messiah. ready writer, goes faster than a skilful scribe. (2) fairer, *etc.*, placed first very appropriately in a bridal hymn.[b] grace, everything that is attractive. (3) gird . . thigh, fig. for preparing the royal warrior for the procession of peace. glory and majesty, which should be to him as royal robes. (4) prosperously,[c] to certain victory for virtue and love.

*The King of kings* (*v.* 2).—I. The personal excellencies of Christ, "Thou art," etc. 1. They are of a moral and mental character; 2. They are not derived; but His own native meritorious perfections. II. His peculiar official qualifications, "Grace is," etc. 1. The doctrine He teaches, the manner in which it is conveyed to the mind; the effect it produces all is grace; 2. The plenitude of this possession. III. His eminent prosperity and success. 1. It descends through Him upon all His subjects; 2. It comprehends perpetual increase; 3. We must look even beyond the glory of the latter day.[d]

*Modern pens in the East* (*v.* 1).—There are still many countries where our quill and steel pens have not yet come into use, and implements for the same purpose are employed which nearly resemble or are identical with those we read of in Biblical times. In the Indian Archipelago pens are made of the leaf-stalks of the Gomuti palm, and in India several species of reed are thus made use of, and also in some parts of Arabia and Persia. Even the *stylus* of sharp metal is to be found at the present day, the impressions being made by its means on the leaves of the talipot and the tara. This is the case in India and Ceylon.—*The personal appearance of Christ.*—We have no account in the Gospels of our Saviour's person. Some writers of an early age (but none so early as to have seen Him) speak of it as wanting dignity, and of His physiognomy as unpleasing. It would be difficult, I believe, to find any better foundation for this strange notion, than an injudicious interpretation of certain prophecies, in a literal meaning, which represent the humiliation which the Son of God was apparent suspension of His providential government, when His foes are triumphant, and His servants defeated." — *Spk. Com.*

*vv.* 23, 24. *J. Basnage*, i. 113.

*v.* 24. *J. Penn*, i. 109.

*b Cheever.*

author,—unknown

*The marriage song of a king.*

*Date.* prob. later than Solomon. Recognised as a *Messianic* Psalm. *Shoshannim*, lilies; the name of a tune. *Song of loves*, a conjugal song.

*a* "His heart is brimming over with fervent thoughts which force themselves into words, and his tongue frames poetry as fast as the pen can write it down." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* "Beauty was regarded by the Heb. as the outward manifestation of inherent nobleness, or of a nature akin to the Divine. Here the representation is unquestionably ideal: it refers to the Messiah." — *Spk. Com.*

*c* Re. vi. 2, xix. 11, 15, 16.

*d D. Katterns.*

"Christ's doctrine must be observed above all other doctrines, be they of angels or men, because He neither could nor willed to er

In His teaching. But in men's doctrine there cloaneth oftentimes to be error: and therefore we must forsake their doctrines if cloakily or expressly they be repugnant to the doctrine of Christ. . . . He being the Wisdom that cannot be deceived, and the Truth that cannot be uttered of man's lips, He hath in this world taught the will of God His Father." — *W. Bruce.*

"If we put off repentance another day, we have a day more to repent of, and a day less to repent in."—*Mason.*

"He that hath promised pardon on our repentance hath not promised life till we repent."—*Quarles.*

"You cannot repent too soon, because you know not how soon it may be too late." —*Fuller.*

True repentance is never too late; but late repentance is seldom true.

to undergo, by clothing His divinity with flesh, in images taken from personal deformity. But from what is recorded in the Gospels of the case with which our Saviour mixed in what, in the modern style, we should call good company: of the respectful attention shown to Him, beyond anything His reputed birth or fortune might demand; and the manner in which His discourses, either of severe reproof or gentle admonition, were received, we may reasonably conclude that He had a dignity of exterior appearance remarkably corresponding with that authority of speech which, upon some occasions, impressed even His enemies with awe, and with that dignified mildness which seems to have been His more natural and usual tone, and drew the applause and admiration of all who heard Him. External feature, however, is generally the impression of the mind upon the body, and words are but the echo of the thoughts; and in prophecy more is usually meant than meets the ear in the first sound, and most obvious sense of the terms employed. Beauty and grace of speech are certainly used in this text as figures of much higher qualities, which were conspicuous in our Lord, and in Him alone of all the sons of men. That image of God in which Adam was created, in our Lord appeared perfect and entire; in the unspotted innocency of His life, the sanctity of His manners, and His perfect obedience to the law of God; in the vast powers of His mind, intellectual and moral: intellectual, in His comprehension of all knowledge; moral, in his power of resisting all the allurements of vice, and of encountering all the difficulties of virtue and religion, despising hardship and shame, enduring pain and death. This was the beauty with which He was adorned beyond the sons of men. In Him, the beauty of the Divine image was refulgent in its original perfection; in all the sons of Adam obscured and marred in a degree to be scarce discernible; the will depraved, the imagination debauched, the reason weak, the passions rampant! This deformity is not externally visible, nor the spiritual beauty which is its opposite: but, could the eye be turned upon the internal man, we should see the hideous shape of a will at enmity with God; a heart disregarding His law, insensible of His goodness, fearless of His wrath, swelling with the passions of ambition, avarice, vainglory, lust. Yet this is the picture of the unregenerated man, by the depravity consequent upon the fall, born in iniquity, and conceived in sin. Christ, on the contrary, by the mysterious manner of His conception, was born without spot of sin; He grew up and lived full of grace and truth, perfectly sanctified in flesh and spirit. With this beauty He was "adorned beyond the sons of men."

5—8. (5) **arrows**, *etc.*, a vigorous picture of the scenes of a battle-field.[a] (6) **thy throne, O God,** *O Elohim*, prob. means either Thy Divinely-constituted throne; or the king is spoken of as God's representative.[b] **the sceptre**, symbol of government.[c] (7) **oil of gladness**, with joy symbolised on festive occasions by precious unguents.[d] (8) **myrrh**,[e] a gum resin celebrated for its aromatic properties. **aloes**, resin of an odoriferous tree. **cassia**, the bark of an aromatic plant. **ivory palaces**, adorned with, not built of ivory.

*Benefits attendant on holiness* (*v.* 7).—These words to be considered as containing a general truth expressive of God's regard for holiness. We regard them—I. As applicable to Christ.

[a] "The arrows of Christ are the winged words of apostolic teaching, by wh. the hearers were pierced to the heart; not for death, but life eternal; and by wh. His enemies are made to become His friends."—*S. Basil and S. Jerome, thro' Wordsworth.*

1. To Him the character transcendently belongs ; 2. On this account God in a supereminent degree "anointed Him with the oil of gladness." II. As applicable to us. 1. The character of the true Christian is here most finely drawn ; 2. On this account God vouchsafes him the richest communications. Infer—(1) What a mercy it is to have such an example as Christ ; (2) How vain are the expectations of those who are not conformed to it.*f*

*Aloes* (*v.* 8).—The Hebrew word translated aloes in the Bible refers to a tree totally different from that which supplies the aloe of commerce. The one yields a fragrant perfume, the other a bitter drastic medicine. Modern botanists have found in the *Aquilaria agallocha*, an Indian plant, a resemblance so close to the aloe of Scripture as to leave little doubt of its identity. The aromatic power of the aloe wood has led it to be greatly esteemed in India, where it is said to have been more precious than gold, and where it is held as sacred, and cut down amid religious ceremonies.

9—12. (9) honourable women, lit. *precious ones ; jewels.* Reference is prob. to the other wives and concubines of the monarch.[a] gold of Ophir, Job xxviii. 6.[b] (10) forget . . people, fr. this it would seem that she was a foreign princess. (11) worship, render reverence to him. (12) daughter of Tyre, fig. for her princely merchants bringing rich bridal gifts. seek thy favour, lit. *smooth or stroke thy face.*

*An offer of marriage* (*vv.* 10, 11).—I. The Lord Jesus addresses to us kind and gracious overtures, for a union resembling marriage. II. He expects us to entertain his overtures seriously. III. He requires us to abandon all others for His sake. IV. He promises to be highly gratified with the contemplation of us. V. He commands us to honour Him with our worship and service.[c]

*Worship thou Him* (*v.* 11).—A Spanish boy, who was a Roman Catholic, having a silver crucifix hanging in his bosom, was asked by a person in his company to sell it for half a dollar, at which he shook his head. He was then offered a dollar, to which he answered in broken accents, "No, not for tousand of tousands." Is not this a keen reproof to children in Protestant countries, who live in the awful neglect of God's "unspeakable gift?"

13—17. (13) within, *i.e.* in the inner chamber where she takes off her veil her full beauty is revealed. wrought gold, gold being woven into it as threads. (14) raiment of needlework, or of embroidery. (15) gladness, as a festive band, with music and dancing. (16) children,[a] *etc.*, fruits of the royal marriage. The new queen is comforted in separating from her father's house by the vision of her posterity. (17) thy name, some refer this and prev. *v.* to the king.[b]

*The Church's beauty and happiness* (*vv.* 13—16).—Let us consider—I. Her transcendent qualities. 1. The internal qualities of her mind ; 2. The external habits of her life. Suited to these qualities is—II. The felicity prepared for her. 1. In due time she shall be brought to the King's palace ; 2. While here she is to make herself ready ; 3. The work completed, she shall be introduced. Address—(1) Those who have never yet espoused the Lord ; 2. Those who profess to stand in the relation of spouse to Christ.[c]

*b* "The person before the Psalmist's mind was a visible manifestation of the Godhead; the ideal King of whom his earthly sovereign was an imperfect type."—*Spk.Com.*

*c* Ps. lxvii. 4, xcvi. 10.

*d* Ps. cxxxiii. 2.

*e* Ex. xxx. 23, 24.

*f C. Simeon, M.A.*

*a* "Polygamy was practised even by the best of kings; and the Psalmist is describing the magnificence of an Oriental court, such as it actually existed before his eyes, not drawing a picture of what ought to be in a perfect state of things." — *Perowne.*

*b* 1 Chr. xxix. 4.

*vv.* 10. *T. Boston*, iv. 89.

*vv.* 10, 11. *G. Whitefield*, v. 65.

*v.* 11. *Luther, Select Wks.* i. 281.

*c G. Brooks.*

*a* For spiritual reference, see 1 Pe. ii. 9 ; Re. i. 6, v. 10, xx. 6.

*b* This view is supported by the fact that the pronouns are in the masculine gender.

*v.* 13. *W. Bennett*, 1 ; *Bp. Dehon*, i. 240.

*v.* 14. *T. Hartley*, 26.

*v.* 17. *Dr. J. Peddie*, i. 374.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*The beauty of the Church* (*v.* 13).—The joy of God's children, as the ground of it, is more inward than outward; as the windows that conveyed the light into Solomon's temple were wider within than they were without. The richest veins of ore lie deepest in the ground. As the glory of God's Church, so the joy of God's children is much, yea, or most, inward. God's children may say, with the Saviour, "We have meat to eat that ye know not of." The godly are oft merry, though they make little show of it; yea, their mirth is most, many times, when it is least seen.[d]—*Characteristic of this Psalm.*—This Psalm is a poetical composition, in the form of an epithalamium, or song of congratulation, upon the marriage of a great king, to be sung to music at the wedding-feast. The topics are such as were the usual groundwork of such gratulatory odes with the poets of antiquity: they all fall under two general heads,—the praises of the bridegroom and the praises of the bride. The bridegroom is praised for the comeliness of his person and the urbanity of his address, for his military exploits, for the extent of his conquests, for the upright administration of his government, for the magnificence of his court. The bride is celebrated for her high birth, for the beauty of her person, the richness of her dress, and her numerous train of blooming bridesmaids. It is foretold that the marriage will be fruitful, and that the sons of the great king will be sovereigns of the whole earth. In this general structure of the poem, we find nothing but the common topics and the common arrangement of every wedding-song: but when we recollect that the relation between the Saviour and His Church is represented in the writings both of the Old and New Testament under the image of the relation of a husband to his wife, that it is a favourite image with all the ancient prophets, when they would set forth the loving-kindness of God for the Church, or the Church's dutiful return of love to Him: while, on the contrary, the idolatry of the Church, in her apostasies, is represented as the adultery of a married woman; that this image has been consecrated to this signification by our Lord's own use of it, who describes God in the act of settling the Church in her final state of peace and perfection, as a king making a marriage for his son;—the conjecture that will naturally arise upon the recollection of these circumstances will be, that this epithalamium, preserved among the sacred writings of the ancient Jewish Church, celebrates no common marriage, but the great mystical wedding, that Christ is the bridegroom, and the spouse His Church. And this was the unanimous opinion of all antiquity, without exception even of the Jewish expositors. For although, with the veil of ignorance and prejudice upon their understandings and their hearts, they discern not the completion of this or of any of their prophecies in the Son of Mary, yet they allow that this is one of the prophecies which relate to the Messiah and Messiah's people; and none of them ever dreamed of an application of it to the marriage of any earthly prince.

## *PSALM THE FORTY-SIXTH.*

author,—unknown: Ps. prob. belongs to the age of Jehoshaphat or Hezekiah

1—3. (1) and strength, express, suitable to Hezekiah, whose name signifies *whom Jehovah strengthens.* very . . trouble, "a help in afflictions is He found exceedingly" (*i.e.* constantly).

*d T. Gataker* (1638).

"The Gospel doth not only represent the doctrine of Christ to be believed; but also the life of Christ to be followed; nor shall any have Him for their advocate and propitiation, but such as are willing to have Him for their pattern and example; to copy out and imitate His humility, patience, purity, benignity, and self-resignation. None shall be benefited by His death that are unwilling to live His life."—*Dr. Worthington.*

"There is no food for soul or body which God has not symbolised. He is light for the eye, sound for the ear, bread for food, wine for weariness, peace for trouble. Every faculty of the soul, if it would but open its door, might see Christ standing over against it, and silently asking by His smile, "Shall I come in unto thee?" But men open the door, and look down, not up; and thus see Him not."—*Beecher.*

(2) removed, or changes, undergoes a series of convulsions. be carried, totter (and fall).[a] (3) roar, or rage and foam.[b]

*God our refuge* (*vv.* 1—3).—I. What God is to the Christian. 1. He is a refuge: 2. Strength; 3. A very present help. II. The confidence of the believer in God. 1. He will not fear; 2. His wants and losses are supplied; 3. He has a reason for not fearing therefore.[c]

*God our refuge* (*v.* 1).—Many years ago, when an invasion of England by Napoleon Bonaparte was much talked of and dreaded, a pious governess and her pupils were conversing on the subject. The young people told what places of concealment they had thought of, if the enemy were to effect a lodgment in their neighbourhood. After each had spoken, one little girl inquired of her instructress, "And where would *your* refuge be, Mrs. C.?" With a look of calm confidence and joyful resignation the lady replied, "My refuge would be in my God." Happy is he who can thus trust in the providence of a Father in heaven. (Ps. xlvi. 1.)

4—7. (4) river, *etc.*, one never-failing stream of water supplied Jerusalem.[a] tabernacles, the sanctuary with its courts. (5) right early, *lit.* at the turning of the morning.[b] (6) heathen, so the Assyrian host would be regarded. melted, was dissolved. (7) Lord of hosts, Jehovah of Hosts. "The Psalmist rests his confidence on two principles—the universality of God's dominion, and His covenanted relation to the Heb. as God of Jacob.

*The Church God's city* (*vv.* 4, 5).—I. The Church in its spirituality the city of God. 1. God laid its foundations; 2. His laws govern it: 3. He dwells in it. II. The Church in its resources—"There is a river," etc. These resources are—1. Abundant; 2. Near. III. The Church's stability. God is in the midst of her—1. By His power to protect her; 2. By His wisdom to guide her; 3. By His riches to supply her need.[c]

*Calmness in a storm.*—When Sir Walter Scott was a schoolboy between ten and eleven years of age, his mother one morning saw him standing still in the street and looking at the sky in the midst of a tremendous thunder-storm. She called to him repeatedly, but he did not seem to hear; at length he returned into the house and told his mother that if she would give him a pencil, he would tell her why he looked at the sky. She acceded to his request, and in a few minutes he laid on her lap the following lines:—

> Loud o'er my head what awful thunders roll,
> What vivid lightnings flash from pole to pole;
> It is Thy voice, O God, that bids them fly;
> Thy voice directs them through the vaulted sky;
> Then let the good Thy mighty power revere,
> Let harden'd sinners Thy just judgments fear.

8—11. (8) desolations, of Israel's enemies. (9) wars to cease, bringing them to an issue by His interposition. (10) be still, cease ye; let your hand sink down.[a] (11) the Lord, *etc.*, as *v.* 7.[b]

*War a curse and a blessing* (*vv.* 8—10).—We observe—I. That war is sent as a scourge to nations. II. That though war be a grievous scourge, yet, like other chastisements sent from God, it

*A hymn of triumph after a great deliverance.*

*Alamoth*, soprano or virgin voices.

*a* "By these terms are represented general social convulsions, evidently connected in their origin with a great invasion. The same figs. recur in Ps. xciii."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* "The music, wh. here becomes *forte*, strengthens the believing confidence of the congregation, despite this wild excitement of the elements."—*Delitzsch.*

*c Pulpit Analyist.*

*a* "In its gentle, undisturbed, refreshing flow, it was an image of the peace and blessing wh. the holy city enjoyed under the protection of God."—*Perowne.* See Is. viii. 6.

Hezekiah led the waters under cover into Jerus., in the time of siege. 2 Chron. xxxii. 3, 4.

*b* Ex. xiv. 27; 2 Ki. xix. 35.

*v.* 4. *R. Erskine*, vii. 62; *T. Bartlett*, ii. 279.

*v.* 5. *T. Bradbury*, i. 13; *W. Mayers*, 405.

*c L. Williams.*

*a* 2 Ki. xix. 19. "Leave off to oppose and vex my people. I am over all for their safety."—*Fausset.*

*b* "Let all believers triumph

in this — they have the presence of a God of power — of all power. They are under the protection of a God in covenant, who not only is able to help them, but is engaged in honour and faithfulness to help them.''—*Mat. Henry.*

v. 8. *Bp. Hall*, v. 447; *J. Wesley*, vii. 386.

vv. 8, 9. *R. Hall*, i. 61.

v. 10. *Dr. S. Stennett*, i. 304; *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 107; *J. H. Newman*, iii. 17.

*c Studies for the Pulpit.*

is seen to be productive of good. 1. Note the benefits of storms in natural world: 2. Storm of war often beneficial: 3. Recent illustrations. III. God makes war to cease when the end for which He had permitted it has been accomplished.[c]

*Silence before God* (*v.* 10).—Thomas Potter, whom Dr. Doddridge mentions in his *Life of Colonel Gardiner*, was a plain and simple man. Though very deficient in natural things, yet he enjoyed the gift of a most retentive memory, both of Scripture phrases and Scripture places, and had an aptness of applying suitable texts in a wonderful, though he pointed them out in an awkward, manner. Two young persons who intended to be married in a short time applied to him, acquainting him with their circumstances, and requesting a text: he immediately pointed them to Psalm xlvi. 10, as altogether suitable to their case. The parties were quite at a loss how to apply this to their situation, and replied that he must be mistaken, asking for another; but Thomas insisted on it—he had no other for them. They then retired; but Providence soon explained that Scripture, for within a few days, by a sudden illness, one of them died, and the survivor was left to learn the needful lesson of submission to His will who does as it pleases Him in heaven or in earth.

## *PSALM THE FORTY-SEVENTH.*

author,—unknown: date as previous Psalm

*A national thanksgiving.*

1—4. (1) clap your hands, sign of joy.[a] people, Heb. plur. *peoples*, heathen nations. (2) terrible, or awful. "Fear is not incompatible with reverent joy."[b] (3) shall subdue, better, *He subdues*.[c] (4) the excellency, or the pride of Jacob. A striking description of the Holy Land.

*Worship* (*vv.* 1—9).—This Psalm may help us to point out the evil and the good connected with worship. Notice—I. The praiseworthy in worship. Three excellent things in worship appear in this Psalm. 1. Exultancy; 2. Enthusiasm; 3. Monotheism; 4. Intelligence. II. The faultworthy in worship. 1. There is something like selfishness here; 2. Something like revenge also.[d]

*Confidence in God* (*v.* 4).—Suppose a son is walking with his father, in whose wisdom he places the most entire confidence. He follows wherever his father leads, though it may be through thorns and briers, cheerfully and contentedly. Another son, we will suppose, distrusts his father's wisdom and love, and when the path is rough and uneven, begins to murmur or repine, wishing that he might be allowed to choose his own path: and though he is obliged to follow, it is with great reluctance and discontent. Now the reason that Christians in general do not enjoy more of God's presence is that they are not willing to walk in His path when it crosses their inclinations. But we shall never be happy until we acquiesce with perfect cheerfulness in all His decisions, and follow wherever He leads without a murmur.[e]

5—9. (5) gone up, returning from His work of deliverance. shout,[a] the glad shout of His rescued people. (6, 7.) with understanding, *i.e.* with the skill befitting the occasion.[b] (8) reigneth, is King; He has manifested His kingly power.

*a* 2 Ki. xi. 12.

As poetic figures see Ps. xcviii. 8; Is. lv. 12.

*b* Ps. lxv. 5, lxviii. 35, lxxvi. 7—9.

*c* "God is ever choosing Israel's inheritance anew, inasmuch as He shows Himself to be the true and mighty protector thereof." —*Perowne.*

See *J. Boys' Wks.* ix. 31.

*v.* 4. *Job Orton*, i. 18.

*d Dr. D. Thomas.*

*e Dr. Payson.*

*a* 2 Sa. vi. 15; 1 Chr. xv. 28. See also Col. ii. 15; Eph. iv. 8.

*b* "A song, either

(9) shields, the princes regarded as the defenders and champions of their people.[c]

*The mighty God.*—A gale had been raging. Our staunch bark was tossed about as if a mere feather upon the billows, and for days "neither sun nor stars appeared." In the wild waste of waters we passed a solitary rock, lofty and massive. The waves beat furiously against it. White-winged sea-birds, weary with their long struggle in the tempest, were clustering on the summit, and pluming themselves in the warm rays that, to appearance, broke through the clouds just there only. Scripture imagery of God as a refuge and high tower rushed upon the mind. It seemed as if those birds, nestled in such security, must be singing the forty-sixth Psalm. The Church of Christ, in her season of peril, safe on the Rock of Ages, and having the light of God's countenance, came to view. At such a moment one could hear Moses giving forth his triumphal song; the sweet singer of Israel striking aloud his harp; Paul and Silas lifting up their prison psalms as they stand firm on the foundation of the Lord. One could see Martin Luther marching fearlessly to the Diet of Worms, and on the way composing his famous version of this animating lyric, and amidst the storm of imperial and papal wrath, uttering the sublime words, "Here I stand; otherwise I cannot do: God be my helper." Often, in later seasons of darkness and peril, would he say to the less courageous Melancthon, "Come, Philip, let us sing the forty-sixth Psalm." Never was there sent to the chief musician, and never did the sons of Korah practise, a more inspiring composition. How stately, how concise, how energetic! It is the Gibraltar of sacred song. It lifts the soul up out of the sea of alarms, giving calmness and firmness.

## *PSALM THE FORTY-EIGHTH.*

**1—3.** (1) mountain of his holiness, His holy mountain, Ps. ii. 6. (2) situation, or *elevation.*[a] whole earth, or whole *land.* sides of the north, the city of the Great King is situated to the north of Zion. The temple was north or north-east of the city. (3) refuge, as the protector of Zion. "He was like an inaccessible citadel, which gives assurance of security to the inhabitants."[b]

*The community of godly men* (*vv.* 1—4).—The Church looked at as a city is—I. Divinely social. In this city God is—1. The chief object of adoration; 2. The chief resident; 3. The absolute monarch: 4. The effective guardian. II. It is impossingly beautiful. III. It is beneficently influential. IV. It is triumphantly powerful. V. It is religiously meditative. VI. It is socially commanding. VII. It is infinitely affluent. This God is our God. 1. He is the only soul-satisfying property; 2. The only enduring property.[c]

*Joachim and the Waldenses* (*v.* 3).—Maximilian, the emperor of Germany, conversing one day in his coach with Johannes Crato, who was his principal physician and a learned Protestant, was lamenting the divisions of Christians, and asked Crato which party, in his opinion, approached the nearest to apostolic simplicity. Crato replied, that he thought that honour belonged



fine in its structure, or beautiful in its melody."—*Personne.*

*c* Hos. iv. 18.

*v.* 5. *E. Erskine,* ii. 259.

*v.* 7. *Bp. Kidder,* 31; *Dr. R. Munkhouse,* i. 259.

*v.* 9. *Bp. Reynolds,* iv. 261.

"That is always best which gives me to myself. The sublime is excited in me by the great stoical doctrine, Obey thyself. That which shows God in me, fortifies me. That which shows God out of me, makes me a wart and a wen. There is no longer a necessary reason for my being. Already the long shadows of untimely oblivion creep over me, and I shall decease for ever."—*Ralph Waldo Emerson.*

**author and date as the two preceding Psalms**

*Subject, God's protecting care of Jerusalem.*

*a* "The word seems to denote a graceful wave-like height; not rugged nor precipitous, but rising by a succession of beautiful terraces."—*Spk. Com.*

*b Jennings and Lowe.*

*c Dr. D. Thomas.* In Switzerland, says Bishop Wilson, we actually saw on a cross, by the roadside, this notice:—"The archbishop of Chamberry

and the bishop of Geneva grant forty days' indulgence to all those who shall say before this cross a Pater and an Ave-Maria, with an act of contrition, 1819."

"Repentance, a salve, a comfort, and a cordial; he that hath her, the keys of heaven hath: this is the guide, this is the post, the path."—*Drayton.*

*d Dr. Cheever.*

to the brethren called Picards (these were also called Waldenses and Albigenses). The emperor said, "I think so too." This being reported to them, afforded them much encouragement, and induced them to dedicate to him a book of their devotions; for, during the preceding year, God had marvellously preserved him from the guilt of their blood. Joachim, a Novo Domo, chancellor of Bohemia, went to Vienna, and would give the emperor no rest until he procured from him a mandate for the revival of a former persecuting ordinance against them. Having obtained his commission, as he was leaving Vienna, and passing a bridge over the Danube, the bridge gave way and fell, when Joachim and all his retinue were plunged into that great river; and all were drowned except six horsemen and one young nobleman, who perceiving his lord in the water, caught hold of his gold chain, and held him up till some fishermen came to their assistance; but they found Joachim dead, and his box containing the persecuting mandate had sunk beyond recovery. The young nobleman was so affected by the hand of God in this affair, that he joined the brethren in their religion, and the persecution dropped.[d]

4—8. (4) **assembled**, some body of confederate kings attacking Judah. (5) **saw it**, from a distance.[a] (6) **fear**, at the defences, but more at the Divine protection that overshadowed the holy city. (7) **ships of Tarshish**, largest kind of merchant vessels. A term used as our East Indiamen. Here fig. for proud and lofty foe. (8) **as . . seen**, Ps. xliv. 1.

*Sacred recollections* (*v.* 9).—I. The subject: loving-kindness. II. The season: in the midst, etc. III. The assertion: we have thought, etc. 1. As an expression of gratitude: 2. An encouragement to confidence; 3. A motive to devotedness.

*Passengers in the "Kent."*—The writer of the interesting *Narrative of the Loss of the Kent East Indiaman*, in 1825, states that, when that vessel was on fire, several of the soldiers' wives and children, who had fled for temporary shelter into the after-cabins on the upper deck, were engaged in prayer and in reading the Scriptures with the ladies; some of whom were enabled, with wonderful self-possession, to offer to others those spiritual consolations which a firm and intelligent trust in the Redeemer of the world appeared at this awful hour to impart to their own breasts. The dignified deportment of two young ladies in particular formed a specimen of natural strength of mind, finely modified by Christian feeling, that failed not to attract the notice and admiration of every one who had an opportunity of witnessing it. On the melancholy announcement being made to them that all hope must be relinquished, and that death was rapidly and inevitably approaching, one of the ladies above referred to, calmly sinking down on her knees, and clasping her hands together, said, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" and immediately proposed to read a portion of the Scriptures to those around her. Her sister, with nearly equal composure and collectedness of mind, selected the forty-sixth and other appropriate Psalms; which were accordingly read, with intervals of prayer, by those ladies alternately to the assembled females.[b]

9—14. (9) **thought**, lit. *compared*, considered, or pondered.[a] **thy temple**, as the place where opportunity for thanksgiving

*a* "From 2 Chr. xx. 20, we find that the invaders were encamped at Tekoa, whence, though at a considerable distance, they had a view of Jerusalem."—*Delitzsch.*

*vv.* 7, 8. *T. Gataker*, ii. 29.

*v.* 8. *Dr. T. Chalmers*, vi. 441; *H. Melvill*, 42, vii. 127.

"It often happens that men who arraign religion have often been arraigned by it; and their defence of truth is only a refusal upon conscience." — *Bishop Warburton.*

*b R. T. S.*

*a* "We have imaged, *i.e.* bodied it forth, or, as we should say, vividly realised."—*Spk. Com.*

was presented. (10) so thy praise, comp. 2 Chr. xx. 29. right hand, the symbol of power. (11) daughters of Judah, fig. for the towns and villages of Judah.[b] walk, *etc.*, addressed to the delivered people, who were to look round and rejoice that their beautiful city was still free.[c] (13) mark ye well, set your heart to; observe closely. consider, lit. *observe one by one*, so as to get due impression from each.[d] (14) unto death, not a part of the Psalm.[e]

*The beauty and strength of Zion* (*vv.* 12—14).—I. What is to be understood by the preservation and protection of the Church? 1. The eternal salvation of the Church of God: 2. The preservation of the Church in the world; 3. Protection in times of persecution, etc. II. What is meant by searching into the causes of the Church's preservation? 1. We are to look off all worldly aids; 2. Look into the Book of God. III. What are the means of the preservation of Zion? 1. Christ as the King; 2. The promises of God; 3. Watchful providence: 4. God's special presence; 5. The covenant of God. IV. Why should we inquire into the means of the Church's preservation? To deliver us from sinful fears, and to discover to us the great mistake of the adversaries of the Church. V. What testimony are we to give to succeeding generations? 1. The exercise of faith and patience in all our trials: 2. The instruction of the young; 3. Tell them what God has done for the Church in our days.[f]

*The right hand of God* (*v.* 10).—All temporal mercies are the mercies of God's left hand, which He gives to many whom He will put at His left hand at the day of judgment. Spiritual mercies are the mercies of His right hand, and mercies in His right hand. Let us be earnest petitioners for those mercies, which whosoever hath shall be placed at the right hand of Christ at the day of judgment. Let us see that we make temporal mercies as so many footstools to raise us up to higher mercies. Let us not make these mercies our God, but bridges to lead us over to God.[g]

## *PSALM THE FORTY-NINTH.*

author,—unknown: a Psalm of the later prophetic period

*Subject, a vindication of the ways of God in view of social inequalities.*

1—4. (1) all ye people, "all are called to hear what interests all." Psalmist deals with universal truths. world, this temporal, transitory state of existence.[a] low and high, lit. *sons of Adam* and *sons of Joh*; *i.e.* sons of common men and sons of great men.[b] (3) wisdom, the Heb. is a plural form to signify wisdom of deep origin and varied form. (4) parable, the Heb. *mashal*, means *a hortatory illustration*.[c] dark saying, an utterance where more is meant than meets the ear. upon the harp, *i.e.* with a musical accompaniment.

*Acceptable instruction.*—Nathan, a prophet and teacher in Salem, sat among his disciples; and words of wisdom flowed from his lips. Then asked Gamaliel, "Master, how is it that we love so well to receive thy instructions and to listen to the words of thy mouth?" The modest teacher smiled, and said, "Is not my name, interpreted, 'to give'? Man receives with pleasure, if you know how to give." "What dost thou give?" asked Hillel. And Nathan answered, "I offer you a golden apple in a silver

*b* Nu. xxi. 25, marg.; Jos. xvii 16.

*c* "The glad sense of freedom, the shout of deliverance, are no less noticeable in this verse than the strong patriotic feeling that breathes in it.—*Perowne*."

*d* "They are to convince themselves by all possible means of the uninjured state of the Holy City, in order that they may be able to tell to posterity that such a marvellous helper as is now manifest to them, is Elohim, our God."—*Delitzsch.*

*e* "It is evident that the word *abmooth* has no place in the text of the Psalm, and is merely a musician's mark."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*f* *Dr. J. Owen.*

*vv.* 11—15. *H. Alford*, 39.

*v.* 13. *Hon. G. C. Percival*, 1. 148.

*v.* 14. *G. Burder*, 6.

*g* *E. Calamy* (1642).

*a* Ps. xvii. 14.

*b* "By the *sons of Adam*, he means the common and lower sort, and by the *sons of great men* the elders and nobles, or such as are raised above their fellows by some dignity."—*Calvin.*

rind: you receive the rind; but you find the apple."[d]—*Partially religious instruction.*—In all cases, as far as my experience and observation reach, they who have received partial religious instruction, and, as it were, made up their minds to it, will hear a new minister so long as he tells them what they already know or believe. This is the standard by which they try his doctrine; but if he attempts to rectify their errors, however manifest, and with whatever ability and candour he does it, or to instruct their ignorance, however palpable, they will take offence, and probably forsake his ministry, accusing him of some deviation from sound doctrine as their reason for so doing. Yet, without their errors be rectified, or their deficiencies supplied, or their characters improved, their attendance is wholly in vain.[e]

5—9. (5) **days of evil**, the time in which evil men bear sway. This might involve personal calamity. **my heels**, lit. *one who dogs the heels*, so a pursuer, or persecutor.[a] (6) **trust . . wealth**, Mk. x. 4. (7) **redeem**, from dying. With all his boasting the rich man cannot control *life*. (8) **precious**, costly, beyond any rich man's payments. **ceaseth for ever**, *i.e.* the would-be purchaser must let it alone for ever.[b] (9) **still live**, connect with *v.* 7. **corruption**, Ps. xvi. 10.

*Redemption is precious* (*v.* 8).—I. That which is redeemed. Look at—1. Its attributes; 2. Its aspirations; 3. Its immortality; 4. The conflict for its possession. II. It is precious in its redemption. 1. The history of redemption; 2. The means employed. Apply:—(1) Ponder the preciousness of this redemption; (2) Seek its extensive blessings; (3) How fearful the sin of despising it: (4) The Gospel offers it to all.[c]

*An inch of time.*—"Millions of money for an inch of time!" cried Elizabeth, the gifted but ambitious Queen of England, upon her dying bed. Unhappy woman! reclining upon a couch—with ten thousand dresses in her wardrobe—a kingdom on which the sun never sets, at her feet—all now are valueless; and she shrieks in anguish, and she shrieks in vain, for a single "inch of time." She had enjoyed threescore and ten years. Like too many among us, she had devoted them to wealth, to pleasure, to pride, and ambition, so that her whole preparation for eternity was crowded into a few moments: and hence she who had wasted more than half a century, would barter millions for an inch of time.

10—13. (10) **wise . . die**, a continuation of *v.* 7.[a] **perish**, from the earth, not perish altogether. (11) **inward thought**, "their whole inner man is filled with one thought." **houses . . ever**, they rejoice in settling estates, and founding families wh. shall bear their name to future generations: thus "hoping to build for themselves an immortality upon earth." (12) **nevertheless**, spite of all their endeavour. **abideth not**, lit. "*passeth not* the night of death" in honour; he goes to corruption even as common men. (13) **this their way**,[b] of bragging about their posterity: *v.* 11.

*A life of faith and sense* (*vv.* 13—15).—I. The text gives us an account of those who live a life of sense. This their way is their folly—1. If we consider their condition: 2. Their capacity for better things. II. Consider the state of mind spoken of in the text, which implies a life of faith. Apply:—1. The deplorable

c "The term comprehends all instructions, sayings, proverbs, allegories or parables."—*Syk. Com.*

v. 2. *Dr. W. Landon*, 58.

d *Krummacher.*

e *T. Scott.*

a "Trans., 'When the evil doing of my supplanters encompasseth me.'"—*Delitzsch.*

b "All that is here taught is, that no wealth can save a man from death, bec. the life of men is not in their own hands, or in that of their fellows, but only in the hand of God, who cannot be bribed." — *Perowne.*

c *Dr. J. Burns.*

vv. 6—9. *T. Blackley*, i. 63.

v. 7. *W. J. E. Bennett*, 243.

v. 8. *W. Oram*, 185.

d *R. T. S.*

a "The observation of universal mortality leaves no place for hope—the wise die, the fool perishes, their wealth goes to others; but this argument would be utterly pointless, had not the just man a different and unfailing hope after death."—*Syk. Com.*

b "This is the way of those who

state of the unregenerate; 2. Seriously address young people; 3. Those who do not put their whole trust in God.[c]

*An American merchant.*—A young merchant, in one of the large cities of America, was seized with a dangerous illness, which brought him, apparently, to the very confines of the eternal world. In this situation his past neglect of the Saviour rushed with power on his conscience, and in the most solemn manner he vowed to lead a new life if he recovered. Unexpectedly, both to himself and every one else, he gradually attained his former health. During the progress of his recovery, he regarded his vow, and professed decided attachment to the service of God; but when he returned to the business of life, he resumed his gaieties, and indulged in all the vanity of a fashionable life. A friend, who had heard and was deeply affected by his solemn vows when in trouble, reminded him of the affecting scene; he remembered it, and declared his intention of fulfilling all he had said, as soon as he had fulfilled two or three pressing engagements of business. Then he would give up his soul to the work; then he would seek God with all his heart. A few days after the admonition, he attended a fashionable and splendid ball: in the midst of his gaiety and mirth, death suddenly entered the festive hall, and the gay and thoughtless merchant fell a lifeless corpse. Oh, immortal sinner, beware of delaying attention to the concerns of eternity![d]

14, 15. (14) like sheep, lying down in their fold at night. feed on them, should be, *feeds them*, tends them. like a shepherd. in the morning, an expression wh. can only be explained by reference to the resurrection.[a] beauty, *etc.*, lit. *and their form is for the destruction of Sheol.*[b] from their dwelling, so that no one will have any dwelling. (15) my soul, Ps. xvi. 10, 11. receive me, take me.[c]

*The crowned skeleton.*—"Aix-la-Chapelle, in Germany, derives its name from the tomb of Charlemagne. He gave instructions that when he died he should be buried in a royal position, not prostrate as slumbering dust, but seated in the attitude of a ruling monarch. He had the mausoleum erected after the model of the chapel which had been reared over the sepulchre of our Saviour at Jerusalem. In a tomb within this chapel he was placed upon a throne. The Gospels, which I suppose he had often read whilst he was living, he would appear determined to study thoroughly after he was dead. He directed that they should be laid upon his knees before him: by his side was his sword—his celebrated sword; upon his head was an imperial crown; and a royal mantle covered his lifeless shoulders. Thus was his body placed, and thus did his body remain for about one hundred and eighty years. One of his successors resolved he would see how Charlemagne looked, and what had become of the riches that adorned his tomb. Nearly a thousand years after Christ, the tomb was opened by the Emperor Otho. The skeleton form of the body was found there, dissolved and dismembered; the various ornaments that I speak of were all there too; but the frame had sunk into fragments, the bones had fallen disjointed and asunder; and there remained nothing but the ghastly skull wearing its crown still, and nothing to signify royalty but this vain pageant of death in its most hideous form! The various relics were taken up, and are now preserved at Vienna; and they have often since been employed in the coronation of the emperors of Germany, in order to signify

have folly, and of those after them who delight to speak in like manner."—*Ewald.*

*c R. Cecil, M.A.*

*v.* 10. *F. Webb*, 1.

*vv.* 10, 11. *W. G. Cooksley*, ii. 18.

*v.* 12. *S. Hieron*, i. 449.

*v.* 13. *Dr. J. Edwards*, iii. 595.

Self-will is so ardent and active that it will break a wall to pieces to make a stool to sit on.

*d R. T. S.*

*a* Comp. Ps. xvii. 15; Da. vii. 22, xii. 2; 1 Co. vi. 2.

"The present life was ordained for them that believe not, and they laugh the faithful to scorn; but they who fear God shall be above them on the day of the resurrection."—*Koran.*

*b* "Whereas their form, falling a prey to the devouring of Hades, becomes habitationless."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* Ge. v. 24; Ps. lxxiii. 24.

*v.* 14. *Dr. T. Mutter*, 270; *W. Guhan*, 536.

*d Dr. Massie.*

"Self-righteousness, that is, no righteousness at all—a righteousness in its own eyes, which can never be a righteousness in the eyes of God—a righteousness in which the in-

pure are to purify the impure, and the unjust to justify the unjust. — *Hare.*

"Self-love is the greatest of flatterers." — *La Rochefoucauld.*

*e Prot. Churchman.*

their greatness, and their being successors of Charlemagne."[d] How striking a comment does the forty-ninth Psalm afford to this strange history! What became of the monarch's body? It was again entombed, though spoiled, till Frederick Barbarossa, in 1165, interrupted the silence of the gloomy palace. He removed the royal remains into a splendid receptacle he had prepared, and placed the marble throne in the church where it is now exhibited to strangers. But the body itself is nowhere to be found! its last resting-place is empty,—the limbs are dispersed in the form of relics. The skull and one arm-bone are preserved as sacred relics in the cathedral. But though scattered be his limbs, Charlemagne shall yet hear the voice of the King of kings, and stand uncrowned in His presence who wears the crowns of the universe.[e]

16—20. (16) **afraid**, that all the good is with the man you are disposed to envy. (17) **for . . away**, Job xxvii. 18, 19. **after him**, into his grave. (18) **blessed his soul**, pronounced himself to be a happy man.[a] (19) **never see light**, not see light for evermore.[b] (20) **man**, *etc.*, as *v.* 12.[c]

*Death the great leveller.*—I remember an Eastern legend which I have always thought furnished a remarkable though unconscious commentary on these words of the Psalmist. Alexander the Great, we are there told, being upon his death-bed, commanded that when he was carried forth to the grave his hands should not be wrapped as was usual in the cere-cloths, but should be left outside the bier, so that all might see them, and might see that they were empty, that there was nothing in them; that he, born to one empire, and the conqueror of another, the possessor while he lived of two worlds—of the East and of the West—and of the treasures of both, yet now when he was dead could retain no smallest portion of these treasures; that in this matter the poorest beggar and he were at length upon equal terms.[d]

## *PSALM THE FIFTIETH.*

author,—poss. Asaph; prob. a writer of the prophetic period

*Subject, the nature of true sacrifice.*

*Asaph*, leader and superintendent of the Levitic choirs appointed by David, 1 Chr. xvi. 4, 5.

*a* Jos. xxii. 22.

*b* Ps. xlviii. 2; La. ii. 15.

*c* De. xxxiii. 2; Ps. lxxx. 1.

*d* Ex. xix. 16, etc.

*e W. Nicholson.*

rr. 1–6. *W. Cadman, Bloomsbury.* vi 131.

1—3. (1) **mighty . . Lord**, Heb. *El, Elohim, Jehovah.*[a] "*El* indicates God's sovereign power: *Elohim* represents Him as the object of worship; *Jehovah* identifies Him with the covenant God of Israel." (2) **perfection of beauty**, Zion is so called,[b] as possessing the sanctuary. **shined**, the Heb. word is specially used of theophanies, *i.e.* visible manifestations of God's presence.[c] (3) **come**, *etc.*, God's coming at Sinai is regarded as the model of all His manifestations.[d] **fire**, comp. Da. vii. 10; 2 Thess. i. 7.

*Zion the abode of God* (*v.* 2).—This text suggests—I. That God dwells in the Church. 1. In the congregation of the righteous; 2. In their hearts individually. II. That the Church is the perfection of beauty only when God dwells in it. Illus.:—World without sun, army without general, ship without pilot.[e]

*A Hottentot boy.*—Sir Jahleel Brenton, of the royal navy, brought from the Cape of Good Hope a Hottentot boy, and stated to Dr. Philip that a change had taken place in the character of the boy: in proof of which he added:—A clergyman asked him which person in the Old Testament he would rather have been, had it been left to his choice. He replied, "David." "Why David rather than Solomon, whose reign was so glorious?" "We have evidence of David's repentance," said the lad; "but I don't

find anything in the Bible that enables me to draw the same satisfactory conclusion concerning the repentance of Solomon."*f*

4—6. (4) heavens from above, better. *hearens above*, in contrast to earth beneath. Heaven and earth are summoned to witness the righteousness of God's procedure.*a* (5) saints, general designation of the covenanted people of Israel. Saints by calling and covenant, not necessarily in personal character. by sacrifice, *lit.* upon sacrifice, "as that by means of wh. the covenant was sealed, Ex. xxiv. 8."*b* (6) heavens, put for the powers of heaven, who testify of God's righteousness in other spheres, and so prepare the way for confidence in God's judging the earth.

*Visions of God.*—God rises upon the sight of some Christians as the sun comes right up against a clear sky, and over a sharp-cut horizon, and upon others as the sun comes up behind clouds, which it is his first work to wear out and disperse with his bright beams. I have seen men that never realised God till they were dying. Some never see Him till the midday of their life. Others see Him early in the morning. Some see Him during sickness: some after sickness; some on the occurrence of some special providence. Sometimes Christians are lifted up, through the susceptibility of their imagination, their affections, and their reason, all conjoined, into such an extraordinary sense of God's glory that it seems as though their soul could not abide in the body, and they think, "Praise God! At last He has had mercy on me, and revealed Himself to me,"—supposing that He had not before cast the light of His countenance upon them.*c*

7—11. (7) hear . . people, the whole nation of Israel is called before the bar of its judge.*a* even thy God, the name is repeated to give additional force.*b* (8) reprove, find fault. to have been, or which have been.*c* Comp. Is. i. 11—14. (9, 10) cattle, simply four-footed beasts. (11) know, "the word used expresses a knowledge wh. masters a subject, compasses it, and makes it its own."*d* mine, *lit.* before me, or with me.

*Spiritual obedience and sacrifice* (*vv.* 7—15).—I. The worthlessness of merely form in religion. 1. Men apt to think they lay God under obligation by observance of external duties; 2. These services of no value without vital piety; 3. This a truth that must be received. II. The religion which alone is pleasing to God. True religion will induce a habit—1. Of lively gratitude; 2. Of willing service: 3. Of humble dependence. Learn—(1) How to estimate aright your character; (2) How to secure a favourable testimony from your God.*e*

*Humanity rewarded.*—A poor Macedonian soldier was one day leading before Alexander a mule laden with gold for the king's use. The beast being so tired that he was not able either to go or sustain the load, the mule-driver took it off, and carried it himself with great difficulty a considerable way. Alexander seeing him just sinking under the burthen, and about to throw it on the ground, cried out, "Friend, do not be weary yet: try and carry it quite through to thy tent, for it is all thine own."

12—15. (12) hungry, the term seems wholly unsuitable for God, but it vigorously declares that He does not need *things*, but wants from His people *spiritual worship*. world is mine, Ex. xix. 5; De. x. 14. (13, 14) thanksgiving, lit. *sacrifice*,

*f R. T. S.*

*a* De. iv. 26, xxxii. 1; Is. i. 2; Mi. vi. 2.

*b Perowne.*

"The covenant relationship is maintained on their part by offering sacrifices as an expression of their obedience and of their fidelity."—*Delitzsch.*

*v.* 5. *T. Manton*, iv. 825; *O. Heywood*, iv. 1; *T. Boston*, v. 501; *J. Scott*, 58.

*c H. W. Beecher.*

*a* Is. i. 2; Ps. lxxxi. 8.

*b* "As if he should say, 'When you tie Me to your own devices, how far is this presumptuous rashness of yours from the reverence that is due to Me! for, seeing that I am God, My majesty ought to restrain all frowardness, so that all flesh should keep silence when I speak.'"—*Calvin.*

*c* "Judgment is not given bec. the people had neglected the externals of the law, or had forgotten to offer the sacrifices appointed by the law. They had brought them; but they had brought them as if the *act were everything*."—*Perowne.*

*d Delitzsch.*

*e C. Simeon, M.A.* vv. 10, 11. *J. Dieteric, Ant.* 416.

*a* Comp. Ps. lxi. 8; Jno. ii. 10.

"Instead of the legal 'sacrifice of peace-offerings for a thanksgiving or a vow,' the true worshipper must offer that wh. the victim represents, viz., praise from a grateful heart, and all duties to wh. he is bound by the terms of his covenant w. God." —*Spk. Com.*

*b Kappa* in 400 Sks.

v. 14. *J. Mede*, i. 379; *Dr. J. Scott*, iii. 445; *Dr. M. Hole*, iv. 272.

v. 15. *Dr. E. Boys*, 314; *Bp. Moore*, i. 255; *J. Kimber*, 206; *J. Fawcett*, ii. 417; *J. P. Hewlett*, 197; *T. Rogers*, ii. 156.

"Sweetness of repentance.—This affliction hath a taste as sweet as any cordial comfort."—*Shakespeare.*

*d Dr. Leifchild.*

e "That is, Thou sharest their condition, their feelings, and their fate."—*Spk. Com.*

*f Gesenius.*

"Thou didst set a stigma on." —*Jennings & Lowe.*

v. 18. *R. Warnford*, ii. 293.

v. 20. *Dr. R. Moss*, viii. 77; *M. A. Meilan*, i. 44.

"We look down at our fellows as the eagle looks over the edge of the cliff at the mice which crawl so far below him. This is the selfishness of the moral nature. Our gifts and attainments are not only to be light and warmth in our *thanksgiving:* give God *outspoken gratitude.*[a] (15) call upon me, in trustful prayer. Ps. xci. 15.

*Encouragements for the pious in the day of trial* (*v.* 15).—I. The Speaker: possessing—1. Boundless knowledge; 2. Infinite goodness; 3. Omnipotent power. II. The persons addressed. 1. Those who fear God: 2. Who are subjects of trial. III. The duty suggested. Calling upon God should be with—1. Humility; 2. Sincerity; 3. Confidence: 4. Consistency; 5. Importunity. IV. The declaration made. He will deliver—1. At what time He sees best; 2. In what way He sees best; 3. By what way He sees best. V. Notice what grateful returns are required. Thou shalt glorify Me—1. By a devout acknowledgment of the Divine goodness; 2. By unreserved devotedness to Him; 3. By promoting His interests. Apply—(1) To those who fear God; (2) Those who are humbly seeking God; (3) Those who are living without God.[b]

*Prayer answered, and God glorified* (*v.* 15).—Some time ago the missionaries in the Fiji Islands were threatened with an attack by enraged hostile chiefs, who came forward uttering their threats and brandishing their weapons. The missionaries were unable to repel force by force, even if they had wished to do so. They shut themselves up in the mission-house, and united in earnest prayer to God, entreating His merciful and Almighty protection. After they had continued in prayer for some time, it was observed that there was less of noise outside the house than there had previously been, and at length it ceased altogether. One of their number went out to ascertain the real state of things. At first he found no one, but at length he found a man, and interrogated him thus:—"Where are the chiefs?" "They are gone," said he. "They found you were praying to your God, and they know your God is a strong God, and they are gone." Thus did God honour the prayers of His servants in the hour of their extremity.[c]

16—20. (16) wicked, hypocrites, hiding their iniquity under professions and outward observances. declare, tell, or number, "as if with a view to their more punctual observance." (17) hatest, *etc.*, Ro. ii. 21, 22. (18) consentedst, hadst pleasure. Ro. i. 32. hast . . adulterers, Heb. *with adulterers is thy portion.*[a] (19) givest, lettest it loose; givest it free play. (20) slanderest, givest a wound to.[b] The chief features of social iniquity are here indicated.

*Cecil and the robbers.*—On one occasion when the Rev. Richard Cecil had to travel on horseback from London to Lewes to serve his churches, instead of leaving town early in the morning, he was detained till noon, in consequence of which he did not arrive on East Grinstead Common till after dark. On this common he met a man on horseback, who appeared to be intoxicated, and ready to fall from his horse at every step. Mr. Cecil called to him and warned him of his danger, which the man disregarding, with his usual benevolence he rode up to him in order to prevent his falling, when the man immediately seized the reins of his horse. Mr. Cecil perceiving he was in bad hands, endeavoured to break away, on which the man threatened to knock him down if he repeated the attempt. Three other men on horseback immediately rode up, placing Mr. Cecil in the midst of them. On perceiving his danger

it struck him, "Here is an occasion for faith!" and that gracious direction also occurred to him: "Call upon Me in the time of trouble; I will deliver thee."—Ps. i. 15. He secretly lifted up his heart to God, entreating the deliverance which He alone could effect. One of the men, who seemed to be the captain of the gang, asked him who he was and whither he was going. Mr. Cecil here recurred to a principle to which his mind was habituated, that "nothing needs a lie;" he therefore told them very frankly his name and whither he was going. The leader said, "Sir, I know you, and have heard you preach at Lewes. Let the gentleman's horse go. We wish you good night." Mr. Cecil had about him sixteen pounds, which he had been to town to receive, and which at that time was to him a large sum.[c]

21—23. (21) **kept silence**, refraining fr. immediate punishment, and on this the wicked presumed.[a] (22) **tear**, *etc.*, Ps. vii. 2. (23) **praise**, as the expression of a thankful heart. **ordereth**, *etc.*, lit. *that disposes* or prepares *his way*.[b] **shew**, or "I will make him look with joy."

*The silence of God* (*v.* 21).—I. The silence of God. He is silent in—1. Wisdom; 2. Love; 3. Justice; 4. Forbearance. II. The misconstruction of the silence of God. 1. By the careless; 2. Infidels; 3. Moralists; 4. Nominal Christians. III. The threatened array of their sins before the memory and the conscience of transgressors in their—1. Number 2. Nature; 3. Root and principle; 4. Relations; 5. Consequences: 6. Aggravations. Apply:—(1) All this is true; (2) You are warned that you may escape; (3) Judgment may be near; (4) Flee to Jesus.[c]

*The silence of God* (*v.* 21).—It sometimes seems as if God cared for nothing. The wicked are at ease. The good are vexed incessantly. The world is full of misery and confusion. The darling of the flock is always made the sacrifice. Some child, in the very midst of its glee, becomes suddenly silent—as a music box, its spring giving way, stops in the midst of its strain, and never plays out the melody. The mother staggers, and wanders through day and night, as if these were mingled into one, and that shot through with preternatural influence of woe. But think not that God's silence is coldness or indifference. When Christ stood by the dead, the silence of tears interpreted His sympathy more wonderfully than even that voice which afterwards called back the footsteps of the brother from the grave, and planted them in life again. God's stillness is full of brooding. Not one tear shall be shed by you that does not hang heavier at His heart than any world upon His hand.[d]

## *PSALM THE FIFTY-FIRST.*

1—4. (1) **thy loving-kindness**, "in all godly sorrow there is hope. Sorrow without hope may be remorse or despair, but it is not true repentance." **blot out**,[a] as fr. a register. **transgressions**,[b] acts of deliberate rebellion. (2) **wash me**, Heb. implies reiterated washing.[c] (3) **acknowledge**, make unreserved confession.[d] **before me**, a constant burden on my heart. (4) **thee only**, so Dav. regards the deep iniquity of his sin wh had been committed against his fellow-men.[e]

*Sin against God* (*v.* 4).—I. The malignity of sin as against God.

own dwellings, but are as well to shine through the window into the dark night, to guide and cheer bewildered travellers upon the road."—*Henry Ward Beecher.*

*c R. T. S.*

*a* "But the long-suffering of God cannot always be abused. The time comes when the sinner is made to feel that God is a righteous Judge."—*Perowne.*

*b* "Acts in a straight right manner, opposed to turning aside. In such pure worship and a pure life evince their true piety, and they will enjoy God's presence and favour."—*Fausset.*

*c G. Brooks.*

"He that hath slight thoughts of sin, never had great thoughts of God."—*Owen.*

*v.* 21. *Bp. Lake*, 1; *E. Wayle*, i. 124; *J. Hotland*, i. 18; *D. Williams*, i. 3; *Bp. Shipley*, i. 41; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 321.

*d H. W. Beecher.*

author,—David

*A penitential Psalm.*

Historical connection, 2 Sa. xi. xii.

*a* Is. xliii. 25, xliv. 22.

*b* "David uses three words, transgression,

iniquity, and sin. Involving every kind and degree of guilt." — *Spk. Com.*

c "Purity as well as pardon is desired by all true penitents." — *Fausset.*

d "The little word *for* in this v. must be understood so as not to imply that his sins must be forgiven him *because* he had confessed them." — *Luther.*

e 2 Sa. xii. 13; 2 Co. vii. 10.

f *G. Brooks.*

v. 3. *Dr. W. Paley*, 160; *Dr. F. W. Hook*, ii. 296.

v. 4. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 238; *T. Scott*, iv. 512; *J. J. Blunt*, 72.

"He that is contented with just grace enough to get to heaven and escape hell, and desires no more, may be sure he hath none at all, and is far from being made partaker of the Divine nature."—*Janeway.*

a *Pierre du Bosc* (1650).

This Psalm has, from earliest Christian times, been called, by way of eminence, the Penitential Psalm, — the *Miserere*, from its opening words in the Vulgate, *Miserere mei Domine.*

a "If we wish that God should turn His face from our sins, our own face must be turned towards them. We must not hide them, if we wish that they should be hidden by Him." — *Wordsworth.*

b Ti. iii. 5; Eph. ii. 10, iv. 24. With this prayer comp

1. It ignores His existence; 2. It repudiates His government; 3. It disputes His veracity; 4. It impugns His justice: 5. It hurls defiance against His omnipotence. II. The equity of God in inflicting punishment on sin—1. When we consider the number and aggravation of our sins; 2. The nature of the Being against whom we have sinned; 3. The rejection of the Saviour.*f*

*Psalm li.*—This Psalm has been on the lips of many a one when dying. The last words of John Orcolampadius, the Swiss divine, who died in 1531, were those which he distinctly, though with panting, breathed for the remission of his sins, using this impressive prayer of David. So, too, a few years later, another Swiss divine, Bullinger. The martyr, Rogers, recited the same on his way to the stake; and it was read to Arnold, of Rugby, just before he expired. When Lady Jane Grey came upon the scaffold, she repeated the Miserere in a most devout manner; after which she tied the handkerchief about her eyes, and laid her head upon the block. Sir Thomas More, too, a very different person, when brought to the place of execution, kneeled down, and, with a loud voice, rehearsed it to the end.

5—8. (5) **behold**, *etc.*, strong poetic fig. to repres. Dav.'s deep feeling that from his earliest being he had been sin-stained. (6) **inward parts**, innermost consciousness. (7) **hyssop**, used in ceremonial cleansings, Nu. xix. 8: Le. xiv. 4—6. (8) **joy and gladness**, in restoring me to sanctuary privileges.

*The sinner cleansed* (*v.* 7).—I. That which David desired. We must consider him as a—1. Penitent; 2. King; 3. Prophet. II. The means by which it was to be accomplished. 1. Hyssop the ordinary means of purification under the law: 2. Blood had to be used with the hyssop; 3. Note the manner of its use. Hyssop typifies repentance—linen dyed scarlet, faith—the staff of cedar, holiness of life. All point to Jesus and the new life in Him.*a*

*Psalm li.*—Nearly every verse has also its special history. Take the first. Henry Vaughan, the poet, who departed this life in 1695, desired the following inscription should be placed on his tomb: "*Servus inutilis, Peccator maximus. Hic jaceo. Gloria! Miserere!*" Dr. Carey, the missionary, suffering from a dangerous illness, was asked, "If this sickness should prove fatal, what passage would you select as the text of your funeral sermon?" He replied, "Oh, I feel that such a poor sinful creature as I is unworthy to have anything said about him; but if a funeral sermon should be preached, let it be from the fifty-first Psalm and first verse.

9, 10. (9) **hide .. sins**, do not only forgive but forget.*a* **blot out**, *v.* 1. (10) **create**, as Gen. i. 1, "implying that the purification of the heart requires, as it were, a fresh act of creative power."*b* **right**, constant, or steadfast.

*Purity* (*v.* 10).—1. What is included in purity of heart? 1. Hatred of sin; 2. Repentance for the past; 3. Freedom from impure thoughts: 4. Fear of the least degree of sin. II. The obligations that lie upon us to seek after such purity of heart. 1. Sin is contrary to the Divine nature; 2. Unfits us for things spiritual; 3. Contrary to Christianity; 4. The hope of heaven enforces it.*c*

*A new heart* (*v.* 10).—Let us but deeply feel the need of a new

heart, and that conviction will secure our cordial assent to the memorable saying with which one of England's greatest men, her bravest and noblest spirits, closed an illustrious carcer on the scaffold of an ungrateful country. When Sir Walter Raleigh had laid his head upon the block, he was asked by the executioner whether it lay right. Whereupon, with the calmness of a hero, and the faith of a Christian, he returned an answer, the power of which we shall all feel when our own head is tossing and turning on death's uneasy pillow: "It matters little, my friend, how the head lies, provided the heart is right."[d]

11—13. (11) away, as unworthy of the kingly office in which Thou hast set me. See case of Saul. thy holy spirit, that spirit of office wh. came upon Dav. after he was anointed king.[a] (12) the joy, wh. was lost in the bitter sense of sin. free spirit, or freely bestowed Spirit: or perhaps, free in the sense of willing, generous, spontaneously seeking and urging to goodness. (13) will I teach, fain would I teach the lessons learnt by my sad experience. converted, return, be restored.

*The joy of salvation* (*v.* 12).—I. That the salvation of God is a blessing enjoyed by His people. II. That the possession of this salvation is accompanied with a special and peculiar joy. III. If the pleasure of enjoying this salvation is great, so also is the danger of losing it. IV. If this joy should be lost, let there be no rest till it is recovered. V. Seek also the upholding Spirit of God.[b]

*A peasant story.*—In Turvey, the parish of the late Rev. L. Richmond, was a dissolute, thoughtless man, who bitterly persecuted the Christian religion in those who professed it. He had formed a secret resolution never more to enter the church. Circumstances, however, constrained him to alter his determination. Mr. R. preached from Psalm li. 10: "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me." Sharper than a two-edged sword is the Word of God; and in its application by the power of the Spirit to this poor man it proved to be the "hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces." He confessed that, immediately on his return home, he for the first time fell on his knees, and, with crying and tears, poured forth the strong emotions of his heart in the language of the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner!"

14, 15. (14) bloodguiltiness,[a] lit. *bloods*: first, blood violently spilt; then the guilt and penalty of the commission. thy righteousness, this expression is explained by 1 John i. 9. (15) O Lord, Adonai, or Master. my lips, wh. had been sealed by the consciousness of unconfessed and unforgiven sin.

*The prayer of penitence* (*v.* 15).—This verse is expressive of—I. Desire after God, awakened by—1. Memory; 2. Observation; 3. Rebuke. II. Inability to honour Him, as regards—1. Praise: 2. Communion of saints; 3. Witnessing for God. III. Expectation for the future. Apply:—(1) A word of caution; (2) Of remembrance: (3) Of exhortation.[b]

*Miserere.*—Lima, the capital of Peru, with Callao, its port-town, was completely desolated by an earthquake, Oct. 28, 1746. The city contained about three thousand inhabitants, of whom one only escaped. This solitary survivor, standing on a fort

the promise in Je. xxiv. 7; Eze. xi. 19, xxxvi. 26.

*c Dr. J. Evans* (1723).

*d Dr. Guthrie.*

*a* 1 Sa. xvi. 13.

"It is equally admissible to take the words to mean the Spirit of grace, *i.e.* the Divine nature as manifesting itself in influencing the moral nature of man."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b Iota* in 400 Sks.

*v.* 11. *J. Cawood*, i. 269; *W. C. Wilson*, i. 72; *J. Hill*, 385.

*v.* 12. *A. Farindon*, iii. 563; *Dr. R. Warren*, iii. 281.

"Inspect the neighbourhood of thy life; every shelf, every nook of thy abode; and, nestling in, quarter thyself in the farthest and most domestic winding of thy snail-house!"—*Richter.*

*a* Most suitably referred to the case of Uriah.

Ge. iv. 10.

*v.* 15. *Dr. J. Boys*, 5; *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 147; *J. Newton*, ii. 563; *H. Draper*, 171; *T. Rogers*, i. 172.

*b Stems and Twigs.*

"Oh! the unspeakable littleness of a soul which, entrusted with Christianity, speaking in God's name to immortal beings, with infinite ex-

citements to the most enlarged, fervent love, sinks down into narrow self-regard, and is chiefly solicitous of its own honour."—*W. Ellery Channing.*

which overlooked the harbour, saw the sea retiring, then, in a mountainous surge, returning with awful violence, and the inhabitants at the same instant running from their houses in the utmost terror and confusion. He heard a cry ascending from all parts of the city,—*Miserere;* and instantly there was universal silence. The sea had overwhelmed the city. The same inundating wave drove a little boat near to the spectator, and by throwing himself into it he was saved.

16, 17. (16) **not sacrifice**, Ps. l. 8—15. (17) **broken spirit**, humbled, meek, penitent.[a] **contrite**, bruised, worn, broken-hearted for sin, as against God.[b] "The deeper the sense of sin, and the truer the sorrow for it, the more heartfelt also will be the thankfulness for pardon and reconciliation. The tender, humble, broken heart is therefore the best thank-offering."[c]

*The broken heart* (*v.* 17).—I. We are to inquire in what a broken heart consists. A state of contrition. II. Inquire how a broken heart is produced. 1. We are to recognise the agent; 2. Observe the instrumentality. III. Why a broken heart is commended. 1. Because it is the state in which alone man can be saved from everlasting ruin; 2. Because it introduces to the enjoyment of all spiritual blessings.[d]

*God's regard for a broken heart.*—Augustine found so much sweetness in this promise that he had it written on the wall opposite his bed where he lay sick, and where he died. It was also a cordial to Bernard on his sick-bed, and was on his lips when he died. Matthew Henry, when about thirteen years of age, wrote thus of himself: "I think it was three years ago that I began to be convinced, hearing a sermon by my father, on Psalm li. 17. I think it was *that* that melted me; afterwards I began to inquire after Christ."

18, 19. (18) **unto Zion**, personal prayer changes into intercession, perhaps bec. the king felt that his private sins had brought judgments on the land. **build**, *etc.*, a fig. for establishing and confirming the nation. Some think that this shows the Ps. to be a composition of the time of the captivity.[a] (19) **then**, *etc.*, thanksgiving fr. men responding to mercies fr. God.

*The broken heart.*—When Whitefield was preaching at Exeter, a man was present who had loaded his pockets with stones, in order to fling them at that precious ambassador of Christ. He heard his prayer, however, with patience; but no sooner had he named his text, than the man pulled a stone out of his pocket and held it in his hand waiting for a fair opportunity to throw. But God sent a sword to his heart, and the stone dropped from his hand. After sermon he went to Mr. Whitefield and told him, "Sir, I came to hear you this day with a view to break your head, but the Spirit of the Lord, through your ministry, has given me a broken heart." The man proved to be a sound convert, and lived to be an ornament to the Gospel.[b]

## *PSALM THE FIFTY-SECOND.*

author,—David

*Subject, the punishment that awaits the evil tongue.*

1—5. (1) **mighty man**, or insolent tyrant.[a] (2) **mischiefs**, destructive malignity: scheme for destruction of company at Nob. **razor**, wh. will cut suddenly. (3) **lovest**, so art bad *at*

[a] "The inward part of a man is said to be broken and crushed when his sinful nature is broken, his ungodly self slain, his impenetrable hardness softened, his haughty vain-glorying brought low,—in fine, when he is in himself become as nothing, and when God is everything to him."—*Delitzsch.*
[b] Fr. Lat. *con*, and *terere*, to rub, or grind.
[c] *Perowne.*
[d] *J. Parsons.* Nothing that is broken bears any value, except the heart, which becomes more valuable the more it is broken.—*Persian Prov.*

[a] It is also suggested that the last two verses may have been added by some one in later times.

[v. 18. *R. Walker*, iii. 263.

[v. 19. *Elia Bertrand*, ii. 262.

[b] *Dr. Cheever.*

*heart.* (4) devouring words, *lit.* words of swallowing up.[b] (5) likewise, act by thee as thou dost act towards others, only with far more terrible effect. destroy, break thee down as a house : seize thee, as coals are taken, raked out fr. the hearth : root thee out, pluck up, and tear away thy tent.

*Apostates* (*v.* 5).—In the long line of portraits of the Doges, in the palace at Venice, one space is empty, and the semblance of a black curtain remains as a melancholy record of glory forfeited. Found guilty of treason against the State, Marino Falieri was beheaded, and his image, as far as possible, blotted from remembrance. Every one's eye rests longer upon the one dark vacancy than upon any one of the fine portraits of the merchant-monarchs ; and so the apostates of the Church are far more frequently the theme of the world's talk than the thousands of good men and true who adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.[a]

6—9. (6) laugh, not in pleasure at his destruction, but at the vindication of God's righteousness.[d] (7) not God his strength, the very root of his evil. (8) olive tree, Ge. viii. 11. Such a tree was prob. growing in or near the place of the sanctuary at Nob. (9) wait on, or proclaim Thy Name.

*The mercy of God* (*v.* 8).—I. It is tender mercy. II. It is great mercy. III. It is undeserved mercy. IV. It is rich mercy. V. It is manifold mercy. VI. It is abounding mercy. VII. It is unfailing mercy.[b]

*The olive tree.*—"There is something strongly indicative of health and vigour in the fresh look of a flourishing olive tree ; but especially when a grove of them is seen together, and the sun shining on their glossy leaves. The trunk is of a moderate height, and gnarled in a picturesque manner ; the foliage is of a deep and peculiar green, and under a passing breeze the uppermost leaves turn round, and show a fine silvery hue. Hence the full meaning of the words, 'His beauty shall be as the olive tree :' and again, 'The Lord called thy name a green olive tree, fair and of goodly fruit.' It is not the evergreen verdure of the tree merely that is referred to, but its health and vigour. Where could we find a better emblem of the Church in a flourishing condition than just such a grove of olives as this, with the peaceful notes of the turtle dove poured forth from the midst, and the sun's living light over all, like the Sun of Righteousness shining over His peaceful Church?"[c]

## PSALM THE FIFTY-THIRD.

1—3. (1) fool, always with added idea of wicked. (2) looked down, illus. fr. Divine exam. of Sodom. Ge. xviii. (3) filthy, indulged sin polluting us, as well as bringing us under Divine punishment.

*Divine scrutiny* (*v.* 2).—I. The manner of His survey. 1. Intently : 2. Without prejudice ; 3. Comprehensively ; 4. With compassion on the penitent ; 5. In wrath on the obdurate. II. The purpose of His survey. 1. To find out those who understand His words and ways ; 2. To find praying, waiting ones. III. The place of His survey. 1. Heaven, where He is understood fully ; 2. Where He is sought constantly. IV. The result of His survey.[a]

Historical connection, 1 Sa. xxii.

*a* So Prayer Bk. Version.

*b* "Malicious words tending to undermine the character and reputation of others." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*c C. H. Spurgeon.*

*a* "There is such a thing as a shout of righteous joy at the downfall of the tyrant and oppressor, at the triumph of righteousness and truth over wrong and falsehood."—*Perowne.*

*b C. H. Spurgeon.*

Stier advises men in business to add to their three columns of pounds, shillings, and pence, a fourth column for the blessing of God.

*v. 7. Dr. E. Young,* i. 1; *Noah Hill,* 76.

*c Nar. of Mission to Jews.*

author,—prob. David

*Subject, see Ps. xiv., of which this is possibly an imitation.*

*Mahalath,* a melancholy tune, adapted to the sombre strain that pervades the Psalm.

*a Stems and Twigs.*

"Whoever considers the study of anatomy, I believe, will never be an atheist; the frame of man's body, and the cohesion of its parts, being so strange and paradoxical, that I hold it to be the greatest miracle of nature." — *Lord Herbert.*

rr. 1, 2. *H. Goodwin*, ii. 165.

v. 3. *E. Berens*, 113.

*b W. Nicholson.*

v. 4. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 242.

r. 6. *T. Bradbury*, iii. 87.

*a S. Page* (1646).

"Self-love exaggerates our faults as well as our virtues."—*Goethe.* "I regard that man as lost, who has lost his sense of shame."—*Plautus.*

*Folly of atheism* (*v.* 1).—The celebrated astronomer Kircher, having an acquaintance who denied the existence of God, took the following method to convince him of his error: he procured a very handsome globe, or representation of the starry heavens, which he placed in a corner of the room to attract his friend's observation, who, when he came, asked from whence it came, and to whom it belonged. "Not to me," said Kircher, "nor was it ever made by any person, but came here by mere chance." "That," replied his sceptical friend, "is absolutely impossible: you surely jest." Kircher, however, seriously persisting in his assertion, took occasion to reason with his friend on his own atheistical principles. "You will not believe," said he, "that this small body originated in mere chance, and yet you would contend that those heavenly bodies, of which it is but a faint resemblance, came into existence without order or design." Pursuing this train of reasoning, his friend was at first confounded, next convinced, and cordially confessed the absurdity of denying the existence of a God.[b]

4—6. (4) **no knowledge**, are they so utterly devoid of understanding? (5) **in great fear**, this *v.* appears to have been added by a later psalmist. (6) **captivity**, *etc.*, this also seems to be full of later associations than any of David's time.

*Relation of sin to shame.*—Sins are ashamed of themselves, and Satan dare not be so open in his temptations as to tender them to us barefaced: but he putteth either some matter of virtue upon them to hide them out of sight: or some pretence of great pleasure or profit to sweeten them, that they may go down with us without distaste. Let us take so much leisure as to take off this disguise, and behold sin in its own proper colours; and we shall see such a loathed deformity as will discourage us from it. We shall discern danger in the touch of it, and death in the committing of it.[a]

## *PSALM THE FIFTY-FOURTH.*

author,— David

*A confident prayer of the oppressed.*

Historical connection, 1 Sa. xxiii. 19, xxvi. 1.

*a* Ps. xx. 1.

See *Dr. S. Chandler's Life of David*, i. 152.

Who can limit the power of Christ to save? Has he ever yet done all that, as God, He might or could do?

1—3. (1) **by thy name**, exertion of those powers wh. are gathered up in Thy name.[a] (2) **of my mouth**, uttering the deep desires of my heart. (3) **strangers**, the Ziphites, who were Jews, but alien to him in spirit.

*The Covenanter's prayer.*—Mr. Alexander Peden, a Scotch Covenanter, with some others, had been, at one time, pursued both by horse and foot, for a considerable way. At last, getting some little height between them and their persecutors, he stood still and said, "Let us pray here, for if the Lord hear not our prayer, and save us, we are all dead men." He then prayed, saying, "O Lord, this is the hour and power of Thine enemies, they may not be idle. But hast Thou no other work for them than to send them after us? Send them after them to whom Thou wilt give strength to flee, for our strength is gone. Twine them about the hill, O Lord, and cast the lap of Thy cloak over puir auld Saunders, and thir puir things, and save us this ae time, and we will keep it in remembrance, and tell to the commendation of Thy guidness, Thy pity and compassion, what Thou didst for us at sic a time." And in this he was heard, for a cloud of mist immediately intervened between them and their persecutors;

and in the meantime, orders came to go in quest of James Renwick, and a great company with him.[b]

4—7. (4) uphold my soul, or guard my life. (5) in thy truth, or in fidelity to Thy promise made to me. (6) freely, or with free-will, gladly. (7) hath delivered, spoken in faith wh. rejoices in a deliverance that is not. as yet. an accomplished fact. seen, *etc.*, a common idiom in Psalms.[a] It occurs twice in the inscription on the Moabitish stone.

*Rev. Henry Erskine.*—This valued minister, who laboured in Northumberland in the seventeenth century, was often with his family reduced to very great straits, but had to record a number of remarkable interpositions of the providence of God in his favour. One time, "the barrel of meal and cruse of oil" were so entirely spent, that when they had supped one night there remained neither provision nor money in the house. In the morning the young children cried for their breakfast, and their father endeavoured to divert them, and, at the same time, to encourage himself and his wife to depend on that bounty which provides for the young ravens when they cry for food. While he was thus engaged, a countryman knocked hard at the door, and called for some one to help him off with his load. Being asked whence he came, and what was his errand, he said that he came from Lady Reburn, with some provisions for Mr. Erskine. They told him he must be mistaken, and that it was more likely to be for another person of a similar name in the town; but he insisted upon it he was right, and cried, "Come, help me off with my load, or else I will throw it down at the door." They then took the sack, and upon opening it, found it filled with butcher's meat and meal; which gave them no small encouragement to depend upon their bountiful Benefactor in future difficulties.[b]

*b Dr. Cheever,*

*a* Ps. xxii. 17, lix. 10, xcii. 11, cxviii. 7.

*v.* 6. *T. White*, 17.

"The Christian needs a reminder every hour; some defeat, surprise, adversity, peril; to be agitated, mortified, beaten out of his course, so that all remains of self will be sifted out."—*Dr. Bushnell.*

One of the most important, but one of the most difficult things for a powerful mind, is to be its own master; a pond may lie quiet in a plain, but a lake wants mountains and compass to hold it in.

*b R. T. S.*

## *PSALM THE FIFTY-FIFTH.*

**author,—David**

*The prayer of one who is betrayed by his friend.*

1—5. (1) give ear, *etc.*, comp. Ps. v. 1, 2, xvii. 1. hide not, veil not Thyself: comp. La. iii. 56.[a] (2) mourn, *etc.*, or I go wandering to and fro, restless and agitated with doubts and fears. "The word 'mourn' indicates perhaps delirious wandering of spirit." make a noise, or moan aloud. (3) oppression, pressure which forced David into a condition of great perplexity. cast iniquity, rend. "They set mischief in motion against me:" or, "They make evil doings slide upon me."[b] (4) sore pained, or writhes.[c] (5) horror, or trembling.[d]

*Great answers to prayer.*—It is said that a man once asked Alexander to give him some money to portion off a daughter. The king bade him go to his treasurer and demand what he pleased. He went and demanded an enormous sum. The treasurer was startled,—said he could not part with so much without an express order, and went to the king, and told him that he thought a small part of the money the man had named might serve for the occasion. "No," replied Alexander, "let him have it all. I like that man: he does me honour; he treats me like a king, and proves, by what he asks, that he believes me to be both rich and generous." "Let us," says Mr. Newton, in quoting this anecdote, "go to the throne of grace, and put up

*a* "God is said to 'veil His ear' when the right state of heart leaves the praying one, and consequently that which makes it acceptable and capable of being answered is wanting to the prayer." — *Delitzsch.*

*b* 2 Sa. xvi. 7, 8.

*c* Comp. Matt. xxvi. 38, 39; 2 Cor. i. 8, 9.

*d* Job xxi. 6; Is. xxi. 4; Eze. vi. 18.

*vv.* 1—3. *J. H Smith*, ii. 197.

"Man's plea to man is that he never more will beg, and that he never begged before; man's plea to God is that he did obtain a former suit, and therefore sues again. How good a God we serve, that, when we sue, makes His old gifts the examples of His new!"—*Quarles.*

"It is said of La Hire, who lived in the reign of Charles VII., that just as he was going to attack the enemy, he fell on his knees and offered the following prayer—'O God! I beseech Thee this day to perform for La Hire as much as Thou wouldst wish La Hire to perform for Thee, if he were God and Thou wert La Hire.'"—*St. Foix*, vol. i. 232.

"Neither days, nor hours, nor seasons, did ever come amiss to faithful prayer."—*J. Taylor.*

*c Swinnocke.*

*a* In his flight fr. Abs., Dav. did lodge in the wilderness, 2 Sa. xv. 28, xvii. 16.

*b* Je. xxv. 4.

*v.* 6. *Dr. Chalmers*, vi. 234.

"The Hindoos have a science which teaches the art of flying! and numbers in every age have tried to acquire it. Those who wish to attain a blessing which is afar off, or who desire to escape from trouble, such petitions as may show that we have honourable views of the riches and bounty of our King."—*Nature of prayer.*—Prayer hath a twofold pre-eminence above all other duties whatsoever, in regard of the universality of its influence, and opportunity for its performance. 1. The universality of its influence. As every sacrifice was to be seasoned with salt, so every undertaking and every affliction of the creature must be sanctified with prayer; nay, as it showeth the excellency of gold that it is laid upon silver itself, so it speaketh the excellency of prayer, that not only natural and civil, but even religious and spiritual actions are overlaid with prayer. We pray not only before we eat or drink our bodily nourishment, but also before we feed on the bread of the Word and the bread in the sacrament. Prayer is requisite to make every providence and every ordinance blessed to us: prayer is needful to make our particular calling successful. Prayer is the guard to secure the fort-royal of the heart; prayer is the porter to keep the door of the lips; prayer is the strong hilt which defendeth the hands; prayer perfumes every relation; prayer helps us to profit by every condition; prayer is the chemist that turns all into gold; prayer is the master-workman,—if that be out of the way, the whole trade stands still, or goeth backward. What the key is to the watch, that prayer is to religion; it winds it up, and sets it agoing. 2. It is before other duties in regard of opportunity for its performance. A Christian cannot always hear, or always read, or always communicate, but he may pray continually. No place, no company can deprive him of this privilege. If he be on the top of a house with Peter, he may pray; if he be in the bottom of the ocean with Jonah, he may pray; if he be walking in the field with Isaac, he may pray when no eye seeth him; if he be waiting at table with Nehemiah, he may pray when no ear heareth him. If he be in the mountains with our Saviour, he may pray; if he be in the prison with Paul, he may pray; wherever he is prayer will help him to find God out. Every saint is God's temple; "and he that carrieth his temple about him," saith Austin, "may go to prayer when he pleaseth." Indeed, to a Christian every house is a house of prayer, every closet a chamber of presence, and every place he comes to an altar whereon he may offer the sacrifice of prayer.[c]

6—8. (6) be at rest, have some settled, fixed, quiet abode, where I might be free from persecution. (7) wander, *etc.*,[a] see Je. ix. 2. (8) tempest,[b] a figure for the malevolent hostility of Absalom's party.

*Desires after heaven* (*v.* 5).—I. The causes of that dissatisfaction which a child of God feels with the present state. 1. The deficiency of present knowledge; 2. Interruptions to happiness of spirit; 3. Conscious inconsistency of character; 4. Imperfections of present service. II. A practical improvement of the Psalmist's desires—instruction. 1. This world is not the Christian's rest; 2. He is to form suitable ideas of heaven; 3. In the exercise of faith he overcomes the fear of death. Admonition:—(1) Let the Christian beware of impatience—others of indifference; (2) How melancholy his state who is satisfied with this world.

[c] *The dove* (*v.* 6).—The classical bards of Greece and Rome make frequent allusions to the surprising rapidity of the dove, and adorn their lines with many beautiful figures from the manner

in which she flies. Sophocles compares the speed with which she cleaves the ethereal clouds to the impetuous rapidity of the whirlwind: and Euripides, the furious impetuosity of the Bacchanals rushing upon Pentheus, to the celerity of her motions. And Kimchi gives it as the reason why the Psalmist prefers the dove to other birds, that, while they become weary with flying, and alight upon a rock or a tree to recruit their strength, and are taken, the dove, when she is fatigued, alternately rests one wing and flies with the other, and by this means escapes from the swiftest pursuers. The Orientals knew well how to avail themselves of her impetuous wing on various occasions. It is a curious fact that she was long employed in those countries as a courier, to carry tidings of importance between distant cities. Ælian asserts that Taurosthenes communicated to his father at Ægina, by a carrier pigeon, the news of his success in the Olympic games, on the very same day in which he obtained the prize. The Romans, it appears from Pliny, often employed doves in the same service; for Brutus, during the siege of Mutina, sent letters tied to their feet into the camp of the consuls. This remarkable custom has descended to modern times; Volney informs us that in Turkey the use of carrier pigeons has been laid aside, only for the last thirty or forty years, because the Kurd robbers killed the birds and carried off their despatches.[c]

9—11. (9) **destroy,** lit. *swallow up;* or frustrate their counsels. Observe the change in the tone of the Psalm from mourning and melancholy to passionate indignation.[a] **divide their tongues,** lit. *slit their tongues.* Evidently alluding to the breaking up of the schemes of the Babel builders.[b] **violence,** *etc.*, the signs of revolutionary movements. (10) **they go,** *i.e.* my enemies who are plotting against me.[c] (11) **wickedness,** or destruction. "The city is become the home of destruction." "In the city all kinds of party passions have broken loose."[d]

*Prayer.*—Thou that hast given up thy name to Me, in the profession of My name, take My counsel for regulating this important duty of secret prayer. Let none see what thou goest about, withdraw thyself into some closet, or private place, and when thou hast made all fast, set thyself in the presence of God, approve thy heart to Him, lay open thy bosom before Him, tell Him all thy grievances; and though no creature is privy to thy secret groans, yet be assured that all thy desires are before God, and thy groaning is not hid from Him. that He takes notice of thy tears, and reserves them in a bottle by Him, to be rewarded in a visible manner in a seasonable time. Thy labour is not in vain, thy work is with the Lord, and thy reward with thy God.[e]

*Power in prayer.*—In a certain town, says Mr. Finney, there had been no revival for many years; the Church was nearly run out, the youth were all unconverted, and desolation reigned unbroken. There lived in a retired part of the town an aged man, a blacksmith by trade, and of so stammering a tongue that it was painful to hear him speak. On one Friday, as he was at work in his shop, alone, his mind became greatly exercised about the state of the Church, and of the impenitent. His agony became so great that he was induced to lay aside his work, lock the shop-door, and spend the afternoon in prayer. He prevailed, and on the Sabbath called on the minister and desired him to appoint a conference-meeting. After some hesitation the minister consented often exclaim, 'Oh! that I had learned the *Aagiya-Kannam;* then should I gain the desire of my heart.' 'Could I but fly, these things would not be so.'"—*Roberts.*

"Short passes, quick ejections, concise forms and remembrances, holy breathings, prayer like little posies, may be sent forth without number on every occasion, and God will note them in His book."—*J. Taylor.*

*c Paxton.*

*a* "The sudden outburst of these fervent, impetuous feelings gives an irregularity to the whole poem. But this is natural."—*Perowne.*

*b* Ge. xi. 7.

"Send confusion upon them, as at Babel, and let them be punished by dispersion."—*Wordsworth.*

*c* Not "violence and strife" personified, as some older versions, and Rabbinical interpretators.

*d Delitzsch.*

*e O. Heywood.*

A man once complained to his minister that he had prayed for a whole year that he might enjoy the comforts of religion, but found no answer to his prayers. The minister replied, "Go home now, and pray, Father, glorify

Thyself." Reader, are you one of those who find no profit in calling upon God? Ask yourself if your prayers are not all selfish.

vr. 10, 11. *Johnson Grant*, 199.

*f Cheever.*

sented, observing, however, that he feared but few would attend. He appointed it the same evening, at a large private house. When evening came, more assembled than could be accommodated in the house. All was silent for a time, until one sinner broke out in tears, and said, if any one could pray, he begged him to pray for him. Another followed, and another, and still another, until it was found that persons from every quarter of the town were under deep convictions. And what was remarkable was, that they all dated their conviction at the hour when the old man was praying in his shop. A powerful revival followed. Thus this old stammering man prevailed, and as a prince had power with God.*f*

12—15. (12) **for . . me,** the Psalmist appears here to renew a kind of soliloquy. The person referred to is usually regarded as Ahithophel.[a] (13) **mine equal,** *Heb.* according to my rank; one so honoured and esteemed as to be treated like an equal. **guide, my associate. acquaintance,** better, intimate friend; confidant. (14) **sweet counsel,** or familiar intercourse. **in company,** or in the throng of festal worshippers. (15) **seize upon,** or surprise. **them,** the party led by Ahithophel and Absalom. **hell,** the grave, Sheol.[b]

*Severed friendship.*—

Alas! they had been friends in youth;
But whispering tongues can poison truth;
And constancy lives in realms above;
And life is thorny; and youth is vain;
And to be wroth with one we love,
Doth work like madness in the brain.
And thus it chanced, as I divine,
With Roland and Sir Leoline.
Each spake words of high disdain
And insult to his heart's best brother:
They parted—ne'er to meet again!
But never either found another
To free the hollow heart from paining—
They stood aloof, the scars remaining,
Like cliffs which had been rent asunder;
A dreary sea now flows between;—
But neither heat, nor frost, nor thunder,
Shall wholly do away, I ween,
The marks of that which once hath been.[c]

16—18. (16) **call upon God,** the mood of the Psalmist is here again changed. (17) **evening,** *etc.*, the resort of the troubled, anxious soul was frequent prayer.[a] The three chief parts of the day are put as a poetical expression for "the whole day," or "without ceasing." (18) **hath delivered,** in past times. With the memory Dav. renews his hope. **many with me,** having hostile purposes against me.

*Prayer* (*v.* 17).—I. The nature of prayer. 1. It is an acknowledgment of the being and providence of God; 2. It re-establishes communion between God and man; 3. It is the grand means by which we obtain our spiritual blessings from God; 4. Only that is real prayer which is presented through Christ. II. The manner in which the Psalmist performed this duty. It was distinguished by—1. Fervour; 2. Regularity; 3. Frequency.

*a* "It is not open enemies, who might have had cause for it, that are opposed to him, but faithless friends, and among them that Ahithophel, of Giloh, the scum of perfidious ingratitude."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* Ahithophel committed suicide, 2 Sa. xvii. 23. Absalom died a sudden and violent death. 2 Sa. xviii. 14.

Comp. Nu. xvi. 30—33.

vr. 12—15. *J. Doughty*, 203.

vr. 14, 15. *G. Moberly*, 388.

v. 15. *C. Barker*, 55.

*c Coleridge.*

*a* Comp. Da. vi. 10; Lu. vi. 12, xviii. 1; Ac. iii. 1; Ph. iv. 6; 1 Th. v. 17.

vr. 16, 17. *J. Grant*, I. 251.

v. 17. *Dr. M. Hale*, I. 845; *M. A. Mellan*, iii. 101; *H. Draper*, 492.

*b* *Gamma* in 400 Sks.

"From a singular conformity of practice in persons remote both

III. The confidence of success which he expresses. It is founded on—1. His knowledge of God's disposition: 2. His belief of the Divine promise: 3. His experience of past favours. We may be satisfied that God hears us when—(1) We feel access to the throne of grace: (2) When we have direct answers to prayer; (3) When we are cheered with the hope that God will hear. Apply.[b]

*Prayer.*—

Dart up thy soul in groans: thy secret groan
Shall pierce His ear, shall pierce His ear alone.
Dart up thy soul in vows: thy secret vow
Shall find Him out, where Heaven alone shall know.
Dart up thy soul in sighs: thy whispering sigh
Shall rouse His ears, and fear no listner nigh.
Send up thy groans, thy sighs, thy closet vow:
There's none, there's none shall know, but Heaven and thou.
Groans freshed with vows, and vows made salt with tears,
Unscale His eyes, and scale His conquered ears:
Shoot up the bosom shafts of thy desire,
Feathered with faith, and double-forked with fire,
And they will hit: fear not, where Heaven bids come,
Heaven's never deaf, but when man's heart is dumb.[c]

*Prayer the forerunner of mercy.*—There was once a young man who had begun to pray, and his father knew it. He said to him, "John, you know I am an enemy to religion, and prayer is a thing that never shall be offered in my house." Still the young man continued earnest in supplication. "Well," said the father, one day, in a hot passion, "you must give up either God or me. I solemnly swear that you shall never darken the threshold of my door again, unless you decide that you will give up praying. I give you till to-morrow morning to choose." The night was spent in prayer by the young disciple. He arose in the morning, sad, to be cast away by his friends, but resolute in spirit that, come what might, he would serve his God. The father abruptly accosted him: "Well, what is the answer?" "Father," he said, "I cannot violate my conscience, I cannot forsake my God!" "Leave immediately," said he. And the mother stood there: the father's hard spirit had made hers hard too; and though she might have wept, she concealed her tears. "Leave immediately," said he. Stepping outside the threshold, the young man said, "I wish you would grant me one request before I go; and if you grant me that, I will never trouble you again." "Well," said the father, "you shall have anything you like; but mark me, you go after you have had that; you shall never have anything again." "It is," said the son, "that you and my mother would kneel down, and let me pray for you before I go." Well, they could hardly object to it; the young man was on his knees in a moment, and began to pray with such unction and power, with such evident love to their souls, with such true and divine earnestness, that they both fell flat on the ground, and when the son rose, there they were; and the father said, "You need not go, John; come and stop, come and stop;" and it was not long before not only he, but the whole of them, began to pray, and they were united to a Christian church.[d]

19—21. (19) God . . old, rend. "God shall hear me, and humble them, and He sitteth (as Judge) of old."[a] no changes, as to age and place, it appears probable that some idea must have obtained generally, that it was a pellent and acceptable to pray three times every day. Such was the practice of David, and also of Daniel, and as a parallel, though, as far as connected with an idolatrous system, a different case, we are informed that "it is an invariable rule with the Brahmins to perform their devotions three times every day: at sunrise, at noon, and at sunset." (Maurice.)—*Burder.*

*c F. Quarles* (1625.)

"For my own part, since first my unbelief was felt, I have been praying fifteen years for faith, and praying with some earnestness, and yet am not possessed of more than half a grain. You smile, sir. I perceive, at the smallness of the quantity; but you would not if you knew its efficacy. Jesus, who knew it well, assures you that a single grain, and a grain as small as a mustard seed, would remove a mountain—remove a mountain-load of guilt from the conscience, a mountain-load of trouble from the mind, a mountain-load from the heart."—*J. Berridge*, 1750.

*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

*a Perowne.*

the word used probably means a change, in the sense of *succession*, as of garments, of troops relieving guard, servants leaving work, and the like.[b] (20) he, *i.e.* Dav.'s treacherous friend, of whom he cannot keep from thinking. covenant, of friendship. (21) butter, *lit.* the butters of his mouth are smooth; his words flow sweet and smooth like cream.[c] war, lit. *war his heart;* absorbed in hatred.

*Flattery and churlishness.*—A chameleon once met a porcupine, and complained that he had taken great pains to make friends with everybody; but, strange to say, he had entirely failed, and could not now be sure that he had a friend in the world. "And by what means," said the porcupine, "have you sought to make friends?" "By flattery," said the chameleon. "I have adapted myself to all I met: humoured the follies and foibles of every one. In order to make people believe that I liked them, I have imitated their manners, as if I considered them models of perfection. So far have I gone in this, that it has become a habit with me: and now my very skin takes the hue and complexion of the thing that happens to be nearest. Yet all this has been in vain; for everybody calls me a turncoat, and I am generally considered selfish, hypocritical, and base." "And no doubt you deserve all this," said the porcupine. "I have taken a different course; but I must confess that I have as few friends as you. I adopted the rule to resent every injury, and every encroachment upon my dignity. I would allow no one even to touch me without sticking into him one or more of my sharp quills. I determined to take care of number one; and the result has been that, while I have vindicated my rights, I have created a universal dislike. I am called old 'Touch-me-not;' and if I am not as much despised, I am even more disliked than you, Sir Chameleon.

22, 23. (22) burden, or *gift;* that which is appointed to man to bear.[a] (23) bloody, *etc.*, words wh. seem prophetic of the fate of Ahithophel and Absalom.[b]

*God as our care-bearer* (v. 22).—I. Let us notice some of the burdens which most commonly afflict mankind. 1. Burdens of the flesh; 2. Of the mind; 3. Of the heart; 4. Of the conscience. II. Consider the encouragement we have to cast our burdens on the Lord.[c]

*Self-importance.*—Then I became too self-important. I imagined that the class could not possibly get along without me. That their souls were charged to and set down against me. That none other could do them good, could bless them, but me. I went about with a load, a burden on my soul. The universe seemed to hang upon me. If I had been taken away, what, oh, what would have become of my poor scholars' souls? Fearful thought! Ah, I had an overweening view of my importance to the world. I was carrying a load of care that none but He who made the soul could carry. It must be an Almighty strength that lifts such a burden. The careworn face and heavy heart unfitted me to teach the joyful news of salvation, and glory, and honour, and blessing. My face did not seem to reflect heaven's light. It belied my teachings. Oh! I learned soon, when the burden seemed about to crush me, that Jesus bore it all. I ceased from attempting to do God's part. The precious word came to me, "Cast thy burdens on the Lord;" and for every duty

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*b* "Change of fortune, *i.e.* those who are always prosperous."—*Calvin.*

"Moral change for the better, *i.e.* amendment."—*Gesenius and Fuerst.*

"Changes from prosperity to adversity."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c Spk. Com.*

v. 19. *Dr. Donne*, v. 468.

"Christian! thou knowest thou carriest gunpowder about thee. Desire them that carry fire to keep at a distance. It is a dangerous crisis, when a proud heart meets with flattering lips."—*Flavel.*

*a* Matt. vi. 25; 1 Pe. v. 7.

"It appears to us that this v. contains the very words of the Psalmist's smooth-tongued enemy. . . If we take them as spoken ironically, they are drawn swords to Dav."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Ps. v. 6, xxxvii. 38; Pr. x. 27; Ex. vii. 17.

v. 22. *Dr. C. Milne*, 1.

*c J. M. Sherwood.*

"To all that have a desire to walk with God, prayer is the key to open the day, and the bolt to shut in the night."—*J. Taylor.*

that is mine, and every real burden, "My grace is sufficient for thee;" and I am trying, fellow-teachers, to reach that point to-day. I cannot say that I have attained it.[d]

*d Wise.*

## *PSALM THE FIFTY-SIXTH.*

author, David

*Subject, God's word of promise the outcast's hope.*

Historical connection, 1 Sa. xxi. 10–15. *Jonath-elem-rechokim*, a tune so called, and meaning, "The silent dove in far-off places."

**1–4.** (1) **man .. up,** lit. *frail man pants for me.*[a] (2) **swallow me,** hungrily pant for me. **O thou most High,** is prob. not an exclamation: it may be trans. *with height of spirit*, or *proudly*. (3) **afraid,** by reason of these watching and proud Philistine enemies. (4) **in God,** *i.e.* by His help. This is the true refrain, or key-note, of the Psalm. **his word,** of promise.

*Faith.*—There is nothing like faith to help at a pinch; faith dissolves doubts, as the sun drives away the mists. And that you may not be put out, know your time of believing is always. There are times when some graces may be out of use, but there is no time wherein faith can be said to be so. Wherefore, faith must be always in exercise. Faith is the eye, is the mouth, is the hand; and one of these is of use all day long. Faith is to see, to receive, to work, or to eat; and a Christian should be seeing, or receiving, or working, or feeding all day long. Let it rain, let it blow, let it thunder, let it lighten, a Christian must still believe.[b]—*The nature of prayer.*—Prayer is the peace of our spirit, the stillness of our thoughts, the evenness of recollection, the seat of meditation, the rest of our cares, and the calm of our tempest: prayer is the issue of a quiet mind, of untroubled thoughts; it is the daughter of charity, and the sister of meekness; and he that prays to God with an angry, that is, with a troubled and discomposed spirit, is like him that retires into a battle to meditate, and sets up his closet in the out-quarters of an army. . . . Anger is a perfect alienation of the mind from prayer, and therefore is contrary to that attention which presents our prayers in a right line to God. For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of its wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down, and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air about his ministries here below.[c]

**5–9.** (5) **wresting words,** distort, or pervert them with design to get accusation against him.[a] (6) **mark my steps,** or heels (Ps. xlix. 5). (7) **shall .. iniquity?** or on account of such iniquity is there escape to them? The original is very obscure. (8) **tellest,** dost keep an exact account of. **my wanderings,** in that period of homelessness and exile.[b] **tears .. bottle,** a bold but expressive metaphor.[c] "As the traveller carefully preserves water, milk, or wine in leather bottles for a journey, so Dav. trusts that God keeps in memory every tear which he sheds." (9) **turn back,** baffled and checked.

*Fear dispelled by faith* (*vv.* 8, 9).—I. Learn from this experience

*a* "Heb. *enosh*, wh. has always the sense of weakness and fragility, and is placed in antithesis to Elohim."—*Spk. Com.*

*b J. Bunyan.*

*c J. Taylor.* "The customary devotion of prayer twice a day is as the falling of the early and the latter dew; but if you will increase and flourish in the works of grace, empty the great clouds sometimes, and let them fall into a full shower of prayer; choose out the seasons in your own discretion, when prayer shall overflow like Jordan in the time of harvest."—*J. Taylor.*

*a* "This description is singularly applicable to David's position among the envious nobles at the court of Achish."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* 1 Sa. xxvi. 20.

*c Spk. Com.*

*v.* 8. *L. Booker*, 288.

*d R. Cecil, M.A.*

"The lachrymatories used in Greece and Rome are, I believe, unknown to the Hindoos. A person in distress, as he weeps, says, 'Ah! Lord, take care of these tears, let them not run in vain.' 'Alas! my husband, why beat me? my tears are known to God.'"—*Roberts.*

*e Paxton.*

of the Psalmist not to go over and over your troubles alone. II. Learn to treat more with God and less with man. III. Let us take encouragement from a consideration of the Divine sympathy. IV. While we live among enemies, let us remember that the weapons of our warfare are not carnal. A word to the ungodly:—God knows your wanderings also.[d]

*Tear-bottles* (*v.* 8).—The custom of putting tears into the *ampulla* or *urnæ lacrymales*, so well known among the Romans, seems to have been more anciently in use in Asia, and particularly among the Hebrews. These lachrymal urns were of different materials, some of glass, some of earth, and of various forms and shapes. One went about to each person in the company at the height of his grief with a piece of cotton in his hand, with which he carefully collects the falling tears, and which he then squeezes into the bottle, preserving them with the greatest care. This was no difficult matter; for Homer says the tears of Telemachus, when he heard of his father, dropped on the ground. They were placed on the sepulchres of the deceased as a memorial of the affection and sorrow of their surviving relations and friends. It will be difficult to account, on any other supposition, for the following expressions of the Psalmist: "Put Thou my tears into Thy bottle." If this view be admitted, the meaning will be: "Let my distress, and the tears I shed in consequence of it, be ever before Thee."[e]

10—13. (10) **in God,** *see v.* 4. (11) **afraid,** *see v.* 3. (12) **vows,**[a] made on former occasions of deliverance. (13) **soul,**[b] or life. **feet from falling,** into surrounding dangers. **light of the living,** *i.e.* as a living man.

*Influence of the Bible on society* (*v.* 10).—I. The impulse given to society by the study of the Bible is moral. II. The influence which it exerts and communicates is holy. III. The impulsive power of the Bible is mighty. IV. The influence of the Bible on society is progressive. V. It is simply instrumental.[c]—*Vows to be performed* (*v.* 12).—I. What vows are upon you? 1. There may be some of a personal and particular nature, into which we cannot inquire; 2. There are some common to us all, made at our baptism, confirmation, at the Lord's table. II. The obligations which are thereby entailed upon us: the least we can do is to render praises—1. In a way of devout acknowledgment; 2. In a way of total surrender of ourselves to God.[d]

*The power of God.*—The Thracians had a very striking emblem expressive of the almighty power of God. It was a sun, with three beams—one shining upon a sea of ice, and dissolving it; another upon a rock, and melting it; and a third upon a dead man, and putting life into him. How admirably does all this harmonise with the Gospel, which an inspired Apostle calls "*the power of God* unto salvation, to every one that believes it!" It melts the hardest heart into uniform obedience to the Divine will, and raises those who were dead in trespasses and sins to a life of righteousness.—"*Pray without ceasing.*"—A sailor who had been long absent from his native country, returned home, flushed with money. Coming to London, where he had never been before, he resolved to gratify himself with the sight of whatever was remarkable. Among other places, he visited St. Paul's. It happened to be at the time of divine service. When carelessly passing, he heard the words, "Pray without ceasing," uttered by the

*a* Ps. lxvi. 13, 14; Ec. v. 4, 5.

*b* Ps. cxvi. 8.

*v.* 12. *H. White,* 227.

*vv.* 12, 13. *S. Charnock,* viii. 461.

*v.* 13. *Dr. C. Gibbes,* 217.

*c Dr. F. A. Cox.*

*d C. Simeon, M.A.*

"The respect or relation which lies between God, considered as an unchangeable Being, and one that is humble, and supplicates, and endeavours to qualify himself for mercy, cannot be the same with that which lies between the same unchangeable God, and one that is obstinate and will not supplicate or endeavour to qualify himself. That is, the same thing or being cannot respect opposite and contradic-

minister, without having any impression made on his mind by them. Having satisfied his curiosity in London, he returned to his marine pursuits, and continued at sea for seven years, without any remarkable occurrence in his history. One fine evening, when the air was soft, the breeze gentle, the heavens serene, and the ocean calm, he was walking the deck, with his feelings soothed by the pleasing aspect of nature, when all of a sudden darted on his mind the words, "Pray without ceasing!" "Pray without ceasing! What words can these be?" he exclaimed: "I think I have heard them before: where could it be?" After a pause—"Oh, it was at St. Paul's in London; the minister read them from the Bible. What! and do the Scriptures say, 'Pray without ceasing'? Oh what a wretch must I be, to have lived so long without praying at all!" God, who at first caused him to hear this passage in his ear, now caused it to spring up, in a way, at a time, and with a power peculiarly His own. The poor fellow now found the lightning of conviction flash on his conscience, the thunders of the law shake his heart, and the great deep of destruction threaten to swallow him up. Now he began, for the first time, to pray; but praying was not all! "Oh," said he, "if I had a Bible, or some good book!" He rummaged his chest, when, in a corner, he espied a Bible which his anxious mother had, twenty years before, placed in his chest, but which till now he had never opened. He snatched it up, put it to his breast, then read, wept, prayed; he believed, and became a new man.[e]

tory characters in the same manner. It is not, in short, that by our supplication we can pretend to produce any alteration in the Deity, but by an alteration in ourselves we may alter the relation and respect lying between Him and us." — *Wollaston*, Phil. iv. 6.

"I have so much business to do today that I shall not be able to get through it with less than three hours' prayer." — *Martin Luther.*

*e Whitecross.*

## *PSALM THE FIFTY-SEVENTH.*

author,— David

*A Psalm of confidence in God during a time of trouble.*

Historical connection, 1 Sa. xxii. 1.

**1—3.** (1) **my soul**, self, or life. **trusteth**, better, takes refuge. He seems to take refuge in a cave, he really takes refuge in God. **shadow . . wings**, *see* Ps. xvii. 8.[a] **calamities**, *lit.* destructions: hostilities. (2) **performeth**, or surely completes what He begins[b] (3) **from . . up**, more prop. rendered, "When he that would swallow me up revileth me."[c]

*Al-taschith*, see Ps. lviii., lix., lxxv., "destroy thou not," initial words of a song, to the tune of wh. this was to be sung.

*a* Ps. xxxvi. 7, lxiii. 7; De. xxxii. 11; Ru. ii. 12; Matt. xxiii. 37.

*b* Ps. cxxxviii. 8; Phi. i. 6.

*c Revised English Bible.*

*Frames and feelings.*—I was once wont to meditate most on my own heart, and to dwell all at home, and look little higher. I was still poring either on my sins or wants, or examining my sincerity: but now, though I am greatly convinced of the need of heart acquaintance and employment, yet I see more need of a higher work: and that I should look oftener upon Christ, and God, and heaven, than upon my own heart. At home I can find distempers to trouble me, and some evidences of my peace; but it is above that I must find matter of delight, and joy, and love, and peace itself. Therefore, I would have one thought at home upon myself and sins, and many thoughts above upon the high, and amiable, and beatifying object.[d]

*d R. Baxter.*

**4—6.** (4) **lions**, Ps. xxii. 21. **teeth are spears**,[a] Pr. xxx. 14; Ps. lv. 21. (5) **exalted**, i.e. "*manifest* Thy glory and Thy majesty in the exercise of universal dominion."[b] (6) **prepared a net**, Ps. vii. 15, 16, ix. 15. **fallen themselves**, allusion may possibly be to Saul's adventure in cave of Engedi.[c]

*Arrows.*—The arrows were usually made of light wood, with a head of brass or iron, which was commonly barbed. Sometimes they were armed with two, three, or four hooks. The heads of

*a* "The mingled figures of wild beasts and weapons of war heighten the picture of danger." — *Fausset.*

*b* "The prayer

for God's exaltation is at the same time a prayer for his own deliverance, but it is may we not say?—a less selfish and a nobler prayer."—*Peroune.*

*c* 1 Sa. xxiv. The praying men of the Fourteenth Massachusetts Regiment in the late war, while stationed in Fort Albany, took an agent of the Christian Commission to see their praying-place. They showed him the bomb-proof of the fort, which afforded them an undisturbed and safe retreat. Every place of prayer is a bomb-proof to its occupants. *d Paxton.*

*a* Ps. li. 10.

*b* Ac. ii. 26.

*c* "With the music of stringed instruments and with song he will awake the not yet risen dawn, the sun still slumbering in its chamber." —*Delitzsch.*

*v.* 7. *J. Slade*, vii. 238.

*vv.* 7, 8. *Bp. Atterbury*, iv. 235.

*v.* 8. *Bp. Horne*, v. 303.

*d Jonathan Brace.* "The incense of the temple was to be beaten to typify the breaking of the heart in prayer." — *T. Watson.*

*e Roberts.*

arrows were sometimes dipped in poison. Horace mentions the poisoned arrows of the ancient Moors. They were used by many other nations in different parts of the world: and if we believe the reports of modern travellers, these cruel weapons are not yet laid aside by some barbarous tribes. The negroes in the countries of Bornou and Soudan fight with poisoned arrows: the arrow is short, and made of iron; the smallest scratch with it causes the body to swell, and is infallibly mortal, unless counteracted by an antidote known among the natives. Everywhere, the poison used for this inhuman purpose was of the deadliest kind; and the slightest wound was followed by almost instant death. From this statement it will appear that arrows were by no means contemptible instruments of destruction, although they are not to be compared with the tremendous inventions of modern warfare. We are not therefore to be surprised that so many striking allusions to the arrow, and the trodden bow, occur in the loftier strains of the inspired writers. The bitter words of the wicked are called "their arrows;" "their teeth are spears and arrows;" and the man that beareth false witness against his neighbour is "a sharp arrow." But in these comparisons there is perhaps a literal meaning, which supposes a connection between the mouth and the arrow. The circumstance related by Mr. Park might possibly have its parallel in the conduct of the ancients; and if it had, clearly accounts for such figures as have been quoted. "Each of the negroes took from his quiver a handful of arrows, and putting two between his teeth, and one in his bow, waved to us with his hand to keep at a distance."[d]

7—11. (7) **fixed**, steadfast in the confidence of faith.[a] The Heb. word denotes the firm and ready attitude of his mind. **sing . . praise**, use both voice and instrument to give expression to trust. (8) **my glory**, or spirit, Ps. xxx. 12.[b] **psaltery**, *etc.*, or harp and cithern. **awake early**, "my song shall itself awake the morning."[c] (9, 10) **unto the heavens**, Ps. xxxvi. 5. (11) **exalted**, *v.* 5.

*The fixed heart* (*v.* 7).—I. On what was David's heart fixed? 1. On God and His service; 2. On a diligent study of the lively oracles of God; 3. On the duty of prayer; 4. On furthering the interests of Zion. II. Why should we do likewise? 1. Because indecision degrades the character; 2. There is no solid reason why the heart should not be fixed on God; 3. Spiritual religion as developed in the Gospel requires it: 4. Without it we shall never accomplish anything truly great and good in God's service; 5. It will be a source of no small comfort in old age and death.[d]

*Awake, my glory* (*v.* 8).—Dr. Boothroyd has this: "Awake, my glory! awake, lyre and harp!" The Orientals often speak to inanimate objects as if they had intelligence. Thus, a strolling musician, before he begins to play in your presence, says, "Arise, arise, my harp, before this great king! play sweetly in his hearing, and well shalt thou be rewarded." A person who has sold an article, says to it, when being carried away, "Go, thou, go." The prophet says, "Awake, O sword!" "When two heroes were preparing for a duel, one of them found a difficulty in drawing his sword from the scabbard: at which his antagonist asked, 'What! is thy sword afraid?' 'No,' replied the other, 'it is only hungry for thy blood.'"[e]

## PSALM THE FIFTY-EIGHTH.

1—5. (1) do, *etc.*, this clause must be rendered, "*Is there indeed that silence of justice ye speak of? would ye judge equitably the sons of men?*"[a] congregation, should be *silence, dumbness.* (2) in the earth, or openly, in public administration. weigh out, spoken sarcastically, instead of weighing in the balances of justice, they weigh out and distribute their own violence.[b] (3) as soon as . . born, giving early signs of their depravity.[c] (4) poison, *etc.*, De. xxxii. 33.[d] adder, or asp. (5) charmers, whisperers, referring to the inarticulate murmurs of the serpent-charmers. never so wisely, or however well versed he may be in his art.

*Serpent-charming.*—"One day a rattlesnake entered our encampment. Among us was a Canadian who could play the flute, and who, to divert us, marched against the serpent with his new species of weapon. On the approach of his enemy, the haughty reptile curls himself into a spiral line, flattens his head, inflates his cheeks, contracts his lips, displays his envenomed fangs and his bold throat; his tongue flows like two flames of fire; his eyes are burning coals; his body, swollen with rage, rises and falls like the bellows of a forge; his dilated skin assumes a dull and scaly appearance: and his tail, whence proceeds the death-announcing sound, vibrates with such rapidity as to resemble a light vapour. The Canadian begins to play upon his flute—the serpent starts with surprise, and draws back his head. In proportion as he is struck with the magic notes, his eyes lose their fierceness, the oscillations of his tail become slower, and the sounds which it makes become weaker and gradually die away. Less perpendicular upon their spiral line, the rings of the charmed serpent are by degrees expanded, and sink one after another on the ground, in concentric circles. The shades of azure green, white and gold, recover their brightness on his quivering skin, and slightly turning his head he remains motionless, in the attitude of attention and pleasure. At this moment the Canadian advances a few steps, producing with the flute sweet and simple notes. The serpent, inclining his variegated neck, opens a passage with his head through the high grass, and begins to creep after the musician; stopping when he stops, and beginning to follow him again as soon as he advances forward. In this manner he was led out of the camp, attended by a great number of spectators, both savages and Europeans, who could scarcely believe their eyes, which had witnessed this effect of harmony."[e]

6—8. (6) break, *etc.*, the expression suits rather the wild beast than the serpent: the "lions" of the second clause of the verse. (7) melt away, as winter torrents do.[a] when . . pieces, rend. "When he shoots out his arrows, let them be as if they were headless:"[b] as if they had been "lopped at the points." (8) snail . . melteth, bec. the slug leaves a slimy trail the idea is taken that it dissolves as it goes along; the idea is manifestly an incorrect one.[c]

*Imprecatory passages in the Psalms* (*vv.* 6—8).—I shall attempt to show—I. That granting that David really expressed these unkind feelings, we are here by no means warranted to copy his author,—prob. David

*A bold protest against unrighteous judges.*

*a Jennings and Lowe.*

"The significance of this expression will be fully explained by Absalom's crafty disparagement of David's judicial system," 2 Sa. xv. 3, 4.

*b* "Ye pretend indeed to hold the balance of justice, and nicely to weigh out to each his just award, but violence is the weight with wh. ye adjust the scales."—*Perowne.*

*c* Eph. ii. 3, iv. 18.

"The Psalmist, however, does not here declare the general doctrine of original or birth sin; he speaks simply of the desperately wicked." — *Spk. Com.*

*d* Job xx. 14—16; Is. xi. 8.

*v.* 1. *J. Charlesworth*, i. 227.

*vv.* 3—5. *M'Cheynes, Remains*, 396.

*e Chateaubriand.*

*a* Job vi. 15.

*b Jennings and Lowe.*

"When he shooteth his arrows, let them be blunted." — *Revised Eng. Bible.*

*c* "Evidently this is nothing more than a poetical

hyperbole, and need not be explained therefore as a popular error, or a mistake in natural history." — *Peroune.*

*d H. A. Herbert, B.A.*

The popular impression (snail melting) is used to illustrate a great truth; the wicked may prosper for a time, but the day will come when they will melt away, when there shall not be, as in the snail, a provision made for their renewing opportunities.

*e Paxton.*

*a Delitzsch.* "The wicked are compared to a heap of thorns, some green, some dried up, lighted under a caldron, and then swept away by a sudden storm, .. before they have heated the pots." —*Spk. Com.* "Ere your caldrons know the thorn, His winds shall sweep away greenwood and brands that glow."—*Kcble.*

*b* Pr. i. 31; Is. iii. 10.

*c Beta* in 400 Sks.

*e.* 10. *J. Malham,* 1; *Bp. R. Watson,* i. 39; *Dr. W. Vincent,* i. 325; *Dr. W. Bell,* ii. 79; *G. W. Woodhouse,* i. 17.

example. II. To prove that he never at all expressed them. III. Point out the real meaning of the passages in question. IV. Conclude with a few short practical observations.[d]

*The melting of snails.*—The snail is, in the Hebrew Scriptures, called *sabbelul*, which the learned Bochart derives from a path, because the snail marks out his path with his slime, and so is called the path-maker; or, from to lodge in, and a winding shell, cochlea, the well-known habitation which this animal carries about with him. Parkhurst is of opinion that a better account of the name may be deduced from the peculiar manner in which snails thrust themselves forward in moving, and from the force with which they adhere to any substance on which they light. The wise Author of nature, having refused them feet and claws to creep and climb, has compensated them in a way more commodious for their state of life, by the broad skin along each side of the belly, and the undulating motion observable there. By the latter, they creep; by the former, assisted by the glutinous slime emitted from their body, they adhere firmly and securely to all kinds of superficies, partly by the tenacity of their slime, and partly by the pressure of the atmosphere. Thus, the snail wastes herself by her own motion, every undulation leaving some of her moisture behind; and in the same manner, the actions of wicked men prove their destruction. They may, like the snail, carry their defence along with them, and retire into it on every appearance of danger; they may confidently trust in their own resources, and banish far away the fear of evil; but the principles of ruin are at work within them, and although the progress may be slow, the result is certain. The holy Psalmist, guided by the spirit of inspiration, prayed, "As a snail which melteth, let every one of them pass away;" and Jehovah answered, "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God."[e]

9—11. (9) before, *etc.*, trans. "Before, then, your pots feel the thorn, whether it be raw or at boiling heat—He whirleth it away."[a] (10) wash . . wicked, such terrible vengeance was common in ancient times, but is painful for us even to contemplate. (11) reward, or fruit.[b] a God, or a Deity.

*A reward for the righteous* (*v.* 11).—I. What are the discriminating features which distinguish the righteous? They are known—1. By the genuineness and spirituality of their faith; 2. By the rectitude and purity of their principles; 3. By the consistency of their conduct. II. What is that reward to which the righteous are entitled? 1. It is a gracious and voluntary one; 2. It is distant and remote; 3. It is suitable and proportionate; 4. It is glorious and eternal. III. What evidences have we for crediting the assertion in the text? 1. From the character of God; 2. From the positive declarations of Scripture; 3. From the general consent of mankind. Apply:—(1) Try to be of the righteous; (2) Be reconciled to afflictions, etc.; (3) Let the infidel be silenced; (4) What will become of the wicked?[c]

*Fall of Robespierre.*—Robespierre had possessed the courage to place over the altars of the churches, which had been transformed into temples dedicated to Reason, the inscription, "There is a Supreme Being" (*un Etre Suprême*); and he was soon, in his own person, to experience that he had not been mistaken.

Betrayed by his own companions, accused of wishing to raise himself to the rank of a dictator, to be a new Cæsar to the new republic, Robespierre stood as a prisoner before that very tribunal of terror himself had called into existence. He was busy signing sentences of death at the town hall, when a number of Jacobins and national guards forced the door of the Hôtel de Ville, and arrested him. He tried to blow out his brains with a pistol, but the attempt was unsuccessful, and only ended in the shattering one of his jaw-bones. Bleeding profusely, he was dragged before Fouquier Tainville, to hear his doom, and then to be delivered into the hands of the executioner. In observance of the customary forms, however, he was first taken to the Tuileries, where the Committee for Public Safety were sitting in the bedroom of Marie Antoinette. To this room Robespierre was dragged, and insultingly thrown on a great table that stood in the centre. The day before he had been sitting at this table, with power over the life and property of every Frenchman; but yesterday he had been signing sentences of death there. They lay still scattered about, and these papers were now the only bandage the suffering man had to staunch the blood which profusely flowed from his wound. It was strange to see how they greedily drank up the blood of the man who had signed them. A *sansculotte* who stood by was moved with compassion, and gave Robespierre a rag from an old tricoloured flag, that he might cover the wound in his face. As the ex-dictator lay groaning amidst the blood-stained sentences, an old national guard raised his arm, and pointing to the fearful spectacle, exclaimed, "Robespierre was right; there is a Supreme Being!"[d]

r. 11. *J. Cooke*, ii. 82; *Dr. J. Free*, 3; *Dr. E. Cobden*, 123; *S. Bourn*, I. 151.

"The Arabs kindle a fire in a large stone pitcher, and when it is hot they mix the meal in water, as we do to make paste, and daub it with the hollow of their hands upon the outside of the pitcher, and this soft pappy dough spreads and is baked in an instant; the heat of the pitcher having dried up all its moisture, the bread comes off in small thin slices, like one of our wafers." (D'Arvieux.)—*Burder.*

*d Life of Queen Hortense.*

## *PSALM THE FIFTY-NINTH.*

author,—David

*Prayer for help against treacherous enemies.*

**1—5.** (1) defend me, lit. *lift me up above.*[a] (2) bloody men, who purposed to take his life. (3) lie in wait, see historical connection of Ps. mighty, or *shameless ones.* not . . sin, without my transgression; apart from any occasion in my sin. (4) run, *etc.*, "both words denote the prompt and officious servility of hirelings."[b] awake, as Ps. vii. 6. (5) God of hosts, 1 Sa. i. 3. heathen, or nations: regarding his immediate foes as only to be classed among the heathen, because of their cruel and unworthy conduct towards him.

Prob. historical connection, 1 Sa. xix. 11—18.

*a* Ps. xviii. 48.

*b Spk. Com.*

"A metaphor borrowed fr. an attacking host, wh., getting a firm footing on the walls of a beleaguered city, is ready to rush in over them, or through them, as already broken, into the city."—*Hengstenberg.*

*Treachery.*—Suppose we were always and at all places armed and provided both against the assaults of hostility and the mines of treachery, it will yet be but an uncomfortable life to be ever in alarms. Though we were compassed round with fire to defend us from wild beasts, the lodging would be unpleasant, because we must always be obliged to watch that fire, and to fear no less the defects of our guard than the diligence of our enemy.[c]

*c Cowley.*

*The world's prayers.*—Whatever may be the explanation of the origin of prayer, the forms which it assumes among men cannot but be of interest. It has been a subject of common observation and remark that among a very large proportion of the peoples of the world there has been almost wholly wanting an ethical element in prayers. Material benefits, not spiritual gifts, are generally desired. Of the forms of word-prayer, perhaps the

The "Prayer for Landlords," which occurs in

one of the liturgies put forth by Edward VI., is an admirable specimen of plain speaking, and was clearly intended to be addressed to one section of the congregation instead of being offered by all. The following sample will show its pertinency:—"We heartily pray Thee that they (who possess the grounds, pastures, and dwelling-places of the earth) may not rack and stretch out the rents of their houses and lands, nor yet take unreasonable fines and incomes after the manner of covetous worldlings, but so let them out to others that the inhabitants thereof may both be able to pay the rents and also honestly to live, to nourish their families, and to relieve the poor. . . . Give them grace also that they may be content with that that is sufficient, and not join house to house nor couple land to land to the impoverishment of others, but so behave themselves in letting out their tenements, lands, and pastures, that after this life they may be received into everlasting dwelling-places."

"What is prayer but the breathing forth of that grace which is breathed into the soul by the Holy Spirit? When God

rudest is that of the Zulu. He worships the spirits of deceased relatives, and his full ritual is given as "People of our house—children!" People of our house, rain, or cattle, or whatever else he wants. When he sneezes, he supposes "the spirits" close at hand, and he only "wishes a wish" by saying what he wants, as "cattle," "good luck." In Central Africa, the fetish man prays for blessings on the medicine he uses. The Polynesian prays to his "Compassionate Father," or some other god, for a blessing, or to "let food grow." The red Indian prays for "good luck in hunting," or that he may be able to "take scalps—to take horses;" that he may find "the enemy asleep;" or, on the great lakes, that the waters may be calm while he passes over. The Karen, in Burmah, prays that his fields may be guarded, and that the spirit of any one entering to destroy the crops may be bound with two strings which he puts in the paddy-fields for the purpose. Men do not always hold a remarkable moderation in these earthly wishes. The wild tribes of Central India not only pray for preservation from "snakes, tigers, and stumbling-blocks," but one of the Khond prayers is to the effect that the harvest may be so great that so much of the seed shall fall as it is being gathered, that when he comes next season he may find it already growing in such quantity as that it shall "look like a young corn-field." A few prayers, however, are discoverable for moral character. The Aztec prays for specific virtues to be imparted to his rulers; and the ancient Aryan, of Vedic times, though he mostly prayed for sheep and cows and other comforts, yet sometimes said: "Through want of strength, thou strong one, have I gone astray. Have mercy," etc. The Parsee prays for forgiveness for deceit, idol-worship, and other faults. Classical heathendom would swell our illustrations beyond proportion. Pericles, Cornelius, Scipio, Plato, and others, commenced important affairs with prayer. Prayer was made to preface transactions in the senate and in military affairs; while orations, the beginning of the year, meals, and even games and wagers, were accompanied with prayer. The Thibetan puts his written prayers in a cylinder, which revolves on a handle, and which he twirls by the aid of a ball and chain, each revolution of the instrument counting for an offering of the enclosed petition. Sometimes he encloses these in a great drum or cylinder, which he attaches to running water, as he constructs his rude flour-mills, thus "praying without ceasing" by water-power; or, in other instances, constructs great prayer windmills. In Burmah, the Buddhist punches his prayers in long, pennant-like slips of gilt paper, which he ties to a slight bamboo stick and waves before his idol-god, each oscillation being a repetition of the prayer, of which he keeps count by a rosary numbering one hundred and eight balls. In Timbuctoo (Africa) the priest, or wizard, or medicine-man, writes prayers on a piece of board, washes it off, and, catching the water in a calabash, gives sick people to drink of it for their recovery, or sells it that it may be sprinkled over objects to improve or protect them. Mohammedans wear Koran prayers about their persons as amulets or charms, though some of the African Mohammedans think they are ineffectual against firearms, which have been invented since Mohammed's day. Ward saw a Mohammedan woman dropping slips of paper on which prayers were written into a river, to obtain from the river-goddess immunity from sickness. In China,

the Taoist, in case of sickness, after performance of certain ceremonies, writes a statement of the fact and a prayer for assistance on a piece of paper, which is burned by the officiating priest, who determines whether it will be answered favourably. And in another process, a message is "sent to heaven" by writing it on paper and performing a ceremony which enables the soul of the petitioner to leave the body, and "carry the message to heaven and bring back an answer." In India, Mohammedans sometimes pray by proxy, wealthy persons hiring a sufficient number of men to alternate and ceaselessly read Koran prayers in the Imanebara in their stead, the merit accruing to the employer. The Mohammedan also uses a rosary, as does the Hindoo ascetic. That of the Mohammedan contains thirty-three beads, that being the number of times which certain parts of his formula, such as "God is most great: there is no God but He," etc., must be repeated.[d]

breathed into man the breath of life, he became a living soul; so when God breathes into the creature the breath of spiritual life, it becomes a praying soul." — *W. Gurnall.*

*d J. T. Gracey.*

**6—10.** (6) **return at evening,** Dav. likens his foes to the wild scavenger dogs, which come out in the evening, and prowl about the streets of Eastern cities. **at evening,** means *every evening.*[a] (7) **belch,** pours out as from a spring.[b] **swords,** *etc.*, Ps. lv. 21. (8) **laugh,** Ps. ii. 4. (9) **his strength,** *i.e.* of Saul, his real enemy. Some render, *O my strength.*[c] **defence,** or high place. (10) **my desire,** these words should be omitted, as not in the original. *See my enemies,* means look calmly upon them.

*a* "Saul's emissaries returned in the evening, prowl about the gates, and go to and fro in the city, prob. in order to occupy every egress, and cut off David's flight." — *Spk. Com.*

*b* A.-S. *bealcjan,* to throw up fr. the stomach with violence, to eject violently.

*c* "David here ascends the watchtower of faith, whence he can look down calmly on the violent assaults of his foes, fully assured that they can do nothing but by the permission of God." —*Calvin.*

*Dogs in the East.*—"The streets are so narrow and rugged that it is almost impossible to go along without a light; and, moreover, one is in danger from the hungry and savage dogs that infest the streets. During the day they act as scavengers, and, whether walking about or lying, are quiet enough; but when the night comes on they arouse themselves and assume quite another character. They go about in all the ferocity of their nature, barking and howling continually, and ready to pounce upon any one if without a light. The Psalmist could hardly select a more graphic comparison of the importance of revealed truth than a lamp unto his feet and a light unto his path (Ps. cxix. 105). I shall never forget one night in Jerusalem, in returning from the English consul's house to my lodgings at the other end of the city, when, in a lonely dark spot, surrounded by these ferocious brutes, my light nearly went out. I never felt more anxious in my life. The incident gave me a perfect idea of the description which the Psalmist gives of his enemies,—'They return at evening,' etc."[d]

*v.* 10. *J. Hill,* 121.

*d Mills' Nablûs.*

**11—15.** (11) **slay them not, by a sudden destruction;** rather, deal with them so as to make them a warning. **scatter them,**[a] make them wanderers. **our shield,** Ps. iii. 3. (12) **pride,** prob. manifesting itself in insolence and taunts. (13) **consume,** *exterminate:* make an end of them. (14) **at evening,** *etc.*, as *v.* 6. (15) **for meat,** wh. they cannot find.[b] **grudge,** or pass the night; remain, eager for food and expecting it.

*a* Je. xxx. 11; Eze. xii. 15, 16.

*b* "Now David mocks at their wicked attempts, and says that after they have wearied themselves all day long, they shall fail of their object."—*Calvin.* "Prayer is the channel into which godly

*Dogs in the East.*—Many cities in Syria, and other parts of the East, are crowded with dogs, which belong to no particular person, and by consequence have none to feed them, but get their food in the streets and about the markets. Dogs also

sorrow pours forth itself, and runs down in brinish tears, while the Christian is accusing himself of, and judging himself for, his abominations with deep shame." — *W. Gurnall.*

*c Paxton.*

abound in all the Indian towns and villages, and are numerous, noisy, and troublesome, especially to travellers. Like those in Syria, they have no respective owners, generally subsist upon charity, and are never destroyed. They frequently hunt in large packs, like the jackals, which they resemble in many other respects. These allusions are clearly involved in the prayer of the royal Psalmist for deliverance from his enemies: "And at evening let them return; and let them make a noise like a dog, and go round about the city. Let them wander up and down for meat, and grudge, if they be not satisfied."[c]

16, 17. (16) **but I,** the pronoun is emphatic. **in the morning,** *i.e.* every fresh morning. Comp. *v.* 6. (17) **high tower,**[a] or defence, as *v.* 9. (18) **O my strength,** *etc.*, as *v.* 9.

*Cure for despondency.*—Doth sorrow and anguish cast down a man's heart, and may he complain that his soul is disquieted within him? Let him fetch an herb out of the Lord's garden called heartsease; an inward joy which the Holy Ghost worketh in him. This is heaven upon earth: this may well be called heartsease: it is a holy, a happy herb to comfort the spirits. Those which we call penal evils are either past, present, or to come. Here is heartsease for all these. Miseries past are solaced, because God hath turned them to our good. Miseries present find mitigation; and the infinite comfort that is with us, within us, sweetens the bitterness that is without us. Miseries future are to us contingent; they are uncertain, but our strength is certain—God: "I know whom I have trusted."[b]

*a* "His inaccessible stronghold, his unapproachable asylum."—*Delitzsch.*

Ps. xviii. 1, 2.

*v.* 16. *H. Sydenham,* 1 and 109.

*vv.* 16—18. *G. Marriott,* 157.

Patient waiting on God, and importunate calling upon God, are not inconsistent.

*b T. Adams* (1623).

## *PSALM THE SIXTIETH.*

author,—David

*A Psalm for the encouragement of a disheartened sovereign.*

*Shushan-eduth,* either the name of a tune; or of the six-stringed lyre.

Historical connection, 2 Sa. viii.; 1 Ch. xviii. 12.

*Aram-Naharaim,* Syria of the two rivers, or Mesopotamia.

*Zobah,* prob. bet. the Euphrates and the Orontes.

*a* Ps. xliv. 9.

*b* Comp. case of Ai, Jos. viii.

*c* Is. li. 17, 22; Je. xxv. 15.

*v.* 2. *Bp. Hall,* v. 431.

1—5. (1) **cast us off,**[a] ref. seems to be to some temporary failures and defeats in the wars with the Edomites, etc. **scattered,** broken. Poss. indic. a defeat of one of the army divisions.[b] **turn thyself,** again to favour and help Thy people. (2) **earth,** better *land.* as if with an earthquake. (3) **hard things,** or experience hardship. **wine of astonishment,** "a common and terrible fig. in the prophetical books."[c] (4) **banner,** raised the standard as a signal for war. **displayed,** *etc.*, or, "that they may rally (round it) from before the bow." (5) **thy beloved,** same as those that *fear Thee.*

*God's banner over His people* (*v.* 4).—I. What banners God has given to us—1. In the elevation of His Son; 2. In the records of His Word; 3. In the experience of His saints. II. For what end are they displayed to us? 1. To confirm our confidence in Him; 2. To assure us of victory over our enemies. Apply:—(1) Fear God; (2) Trust in Him.[d]

*War.*—I scarcely ever heard of any [hero], excepting Hercules, but did more mischief than good. These overgrown mortals commonly use their will with their right hand, and their reason with their left. Their pride is their title, and their power puts them in possession. Their pomp is furnished from rapine, and their scarlet dyed with human blood. To drive justice, and peace, and plenty before them is a noble victory; and the progress of violence goes for extent of empire. Pray, how did Philip's glorious humour discover itself? Why, mostly by out-

raging and murdering his neighbours! 'Tis true the man was brave: and had been severely handled by showing it. He had fought himself almost to the stumps, but still he went on. And am I to admire a man because he will use himself ill to use me worse? And as for Alexander, what extent of country did he ravage, and how many thousands were sacrificed to his caprice! What famine, what inundation, what plague could keep pace with him? If his power had been equal to his ambition, God could scarcely have made the world faster than he would have destroyed it. If wrecks, and ruins, and desolations of kingdoms are marks of greatness, why do we not worship a tempest, and erect a statue for the plague?[c]

6—8. (6) in his holiness, or sanctuary,[a] *i.e.* the mercy-seat, whence this oracle came forth. In the trouble Dav. may have appealed to the high priest.[b] Shechem . . Succoth, the central region of Israel, one west, the other east, of Jordan. God's promise that He would see to it involved its safety from enemies. (7) Gilead . . Manasseh . . Ephraim . . Judah, represent the security of all David's territory. (8) washpot, vessel used for washing the feet. cast . . shoe, "Edom is regarded as the slave to whom the master throws his shoe to clean."[c] triumph, or "Unto me, O Philistia, shout loudly."

*Names of countries.*—It is a good rule to refer the names of countries to their actual physical aspects. "Are not the terms Edom and the Red Sea to be referred to the red sandy soil? Would Albion ever have gained the name if it had not been for her white cliffs? Was Greenland not the glad welcome given by the hardy Icelanders to that green oasis? And is not the White Sea so called from its proximity to the regions of ice and snow?"[d]—*Succoth.*—What says David? "God hath spoken in His holiness, hath made an express and inviolable promise, that I shall be ruler of His people Israel. I will rejoice, therefore; away with every alarming apprehension; I will even exult and triumph. Nay more; I will divide Sichem, and mete out the valley of Succoth; I will look upon the whole land as my own, I will divide it, and dispose of it, just as if it was already in my possession." Why should not you and I also say—"God hath spoken in His holiness; hath expressly and solemnly declared the promise of an all-sufficient Saviour is to you?" We will rejoice, therefore; confiding in this most faithful word, we will bid adieu to all disquieting fears, and make our boast of this glorious Redeemer.[e]

9—12. (9) who will, or, "Oh for one to conduct me." strong city, the wonderful rock-built city of Petra.[a] (10) hadst cast us off, *v.* 1. (11) help, marg. *salvation.* (12) do valiantly,[b] Ps. xviii. 16; Nu. xxiv. 18.

*The friendship of Christ.*—"What do you do without a mother to tell your troubles?" asked a child who had a mother of one who had none. "Mother told me whom to go to before she died," answered the little orphan. "I go to the Lord Jesus; He was mother's Friend, and He is mine." "Jesus Christ is in the sky. He is a way off, and He has a great many things to attend to in heaven. It is not likely He can stop to mind you." "I do not know anything about that," said the orphan. "All I know, He says He will; and that's enough for me."

*v.* 4. *R. W. Dibdin,* 153.
*d C. Simeon, M.A.* If you want your spiritual life to be more healthy and vigorous you must just come boldly to the throne of grace. The secret of weakness is little faith and little prayer.
*e Collier.*

*a Luther.*
*b Ewald.*
*c* "The king regards Moab as a vessel fit only for the meanest uses,—he casts the shoes, which he takes off in order to wash his feet, to Edom as a mere slave."—*Spk. Com.*

By far the greater part of our petitions don't press for immediate answers. They wind round our Father in heaven the silken thread of communion, not to draw down blessings, but to bind us to God.

*d Notes and Queries.*
*e Hervey.*

*a Hengstenberg.*
*b* Eph. vi. 10; Phi. iv. 13.
*v.* 9. *G. Marriott,* i. 137.
*v.* 11. *C. Davy,* iv. 102.
*v.* 12. *W. Jones,* ii. 281.
Be full of prayer whenever you attempt to preach, and go from your closet to your pulpit with the inward groanings of the Spirit pressing for utterance at your lips.

author,—David

*Thanksgiving of an exiled king on his restoration.*

*Neginah*, upon a single stringed instrument.

*a* Pr. Book Vers. "is in heaviness." Ps. xlii. 6.

*v.* 1, 2. *W. Reading*, 319; *Dr. J. Owen*, xvi. 428; *A. B. Evans*, 61; *F. Elwin*, i. 145.

*b G. Stockdale.*

Labourers on an English railway lately found a thrush's nest under a rail, with the hen peacefully sitting on four eggs, undisturbed by the thunder of passing trains.

*c R. T. S.*

*a* The royal house of David is prob. meant: with distant reference to Messiah.

*b Studies for Pulpit.*

Prayer is the cry of those that cannot do and do not know, unto One who does know and who can do.

The fountain is unsealed, but you only sip a few drops. The bread of life is before you, yet you only eat a few crumbs. The treasury of heaven is open, but you only take a few pence. O! man of little

## *PSALM THE SIXTY-FIRST.*

1—4. (1) cry, *i.e.* plaintive cry. (2) end of the earth, or country. Dav. so calls the districts E. of Jordan. overwhelmed, fainteth, or fig. *roll oneself up; shrink into oneself.*[a] higher than I, so a place of perfect security, which without Thee I cannot reach. (3) hast been, in times of former trouble. (4) abide . . ever, the resolve of a restored one, who, by exile, has been led to value his religious privileges. wings, Psalmist refers to the wings of the cherubim over the mercy-seat.

*The sheltering rock* (*v.* 2).—I. The season referred to. Heart overwhelmed—1. From a sense of the Divine claims on our obedience; 2. From the pressure of heavy trials; 3. From the keenness of temptation; 4. From anticipation of future evils. II. Whither the Psalmist desires to be led,—to the rock. This gives the idea of—1. Strength; 2. Durability. III. The grounds of the Psalmist's plea. 1. This prayer is prompted by a consciousness of need; 2. In it we have the true source of ability addressed; 3. And we see the encouragement he derives from past experience.[b]

*A minister's daughter.*—A few days before the death of a pious little girl, her father had been preaching from that beautiful passage in Psa. lxi. 2, "Lead me to the rock that is higher than I." Upon rejoining his afflicted family, the text was mentioned, and an outline of the sermon given, with which she appeared powerfully impressed. Upon the remark being made that Christ is constantly spoken of, both in the Old and New Testaments, as a rock, especially in the Psalms; and how delightful it was to the believer, that when placed upon this rock the storms of life or of death could not remove him, for there he was safe, she seemed to derive much strength and comfort from what had been brought to her notice; and in all the subsequent readings of the Psalms, whenever the rock was spoken of, she stopped her mother, saying, "Here, mamma, is the rock again."[c]

5—8. (5) the heritage, the happy circumstances. Dav. may compare the permanence of his kingship with the temporary character of Saul's. (6) prolong, lit. *days to the king's days wilt Thou add.*[a] (7) abide, *sit* on his throne, or judgment-seat. (8) that I may, or *at my fulfilling.*

*The heritage of the people of God* (*v.* 5).—I. The text implies that there are those who fear God's name. 1. All do not fear God; 2. State the nature of true fear of God. II. Those who do fear God have an inheritance. 1. Supplies in the time of need; 2. Consolation in the time of trouble; 3. Victory in the time of conflict; 4. Peace of conscience.[b]

*The saints' inheritance.*—Come, believers, come to the top of Pisgah, and take a prospect of the Holy Land. Seest thou the land that is afar off? behold, that is the land of promise, where, after our weary pilgrimage, we shall have an everlasting glorious rest. There the flourishing vines are ever laden with full clusters of the richest grapes. Oh, how happy then shall we be, when, instead of the waters of the wilderness, we shall come to drink of the wines of Canaan. There the rivers do continually

flow with milk and honey—here we are compassed with enemies, but there we shall have perfect tranquillity, an eternal security, an unchangeable felicity. Oh, that we had the wings of a dove, that we might fly from this high mountain to that Holy Land.[c]

faith, wherefore do you doubt? Awake to know your privileges; awake and sleep no longer.

*c Wilkes* (1625).

## *PSALM THE SIXTY-SECOND.*

author,—David

*A Psalm of confidence in God.*

*Jeduthun*, see Ps. xxxix.

1—4. (1) truly, or *only*. waiteth, *etc.*, or my soul is silently waiting unto God.[a] Ps. xxxiii. 20. (2) rock, Ps. xviii. 2. (3) imagine mischief, assault: rush with violence; rage tumultuously. bowing wall, bulged out, and ready to fall. tottering fence, or hedge. (4) excellency, rank, and dignity suitable to a king. with their mouth, *lit.* with *his* mouth, one arch-traitor being in Dav.'s thought.

*A tottering wall* (*v.* 3).—Dr. Boothroyd—"like a tottering wall." In consequence of heavy rains and floods, and unsound foundations, it is very common to see walls much out of perpendicular, and some of them so much so that it might be thought scarcely possible for them to stand. "Poor old Raman is very ill, I hear." "Yes, the wall is bowing." "Begone, thou low caste; thou art a *kutte-chivver*," i.e. a ruined wall. "By the oppression of the head man the people of that village are like a ruined wall."[b]

*a* "'Only unto God my soul is silence,' *i.e.* is hushed into perfect resignation before Him."—*Perowne.*

*b Roberts.*

5—8. (5) only, and so *wholly*. (6) rock, *v.* 2. be moved, comp. *greatly moved* of *v.* 2. (7) in God, or *on Him*. (8) all times, whether prosperous or disastrous.

*Waiting only upon God* (*v.* 5).—I. We begin with the exhortation, by which David means—1. My soul, make God thine only object in life; 2. Have no care but to please God; 3. Make God thy only confidence and trust; 4. Make God thy only guide; 5. And thy only protection in the time of danger. II. Now I close with the expectation—What is enough in this world, and in the world to come life everlasting.[a]

*Confidence of a child.*—In a public school in New York, a short time since, on an alarm of fire, a terrible panic ensued, and many of the scholars were injured by rushing to the doors, and one of the teachers, a young lady, jumped from a window. Among the hundreds of children with whom the building was crowded was one girl, among the best in the school, who, through all the frightful scene, maintained composure. The colour, indeed, forsook her cheek, her lip quivered, the tears stood in her eyes, but she did not move. After order had been restored, and all her companions had been brought back to their places, the question was asked her, how she came to sit so still when everybody else was in such a fright. "My father," said she, "is a fireman, and he told me if there was an alarm of fire in the school, I must just sit still."

*v.* 5. *W. Toy Young*, i. 52.

*v.* 8. *T. Lye, Morn. Ex.* i. 369; *J. Abernethy*, ii. 380.

*a C. H. Spurgeon.* "All grace comes from the God of grace; not only the first seed of grace, but its growth and increment; and God usually sheds forth His grace in a way of communion with His people. Now, by prayer the Christian is led into most intimate communion with God; and from communion follows communication."—*Gurnall.*

9—12. (9) low degree, in the social scale. high degree, in the same social scale. altogether, the sum of their weights is lighter than nothingness. (10) in oppression, or be not ye overcome by the temptation to unjust acquisitions. (11) twice, or these two things have I heard, *God is powerful, God is merciful.* (12) for, *etc.*, the Psalmist understands that both power and mercy are shown in God's strict and righteous dealings.[a]

*a* "This is the only truly worthy representation of God. Power without love is brutality, and love without power is weakness. Power

is the strong foundation of love, and love is the beauty and crown of power." —*Perowne.*

Ps. cxlv. 6, 7.

v. 9. *Bp. Lake*, 9; *Dr. J. Donne*, iii. 135.

v. 10. *J. Wesley*, vii. 355; *Dr. T. F. Dibdin*, 149.

v. 11. *Abp. Tillotson*, viii. 396; *Dr. W. Brakenridge*, 75.

v. 12. *E. Veale, Morn. Ex.* vi. 183.

*b W. W. Whythe.*

*c Smiles.*

*God's power* (*v.* 11).—I. God's power acts with infinite ease. II. God's power is never exhausted by exertion. III. God's power is regulated by His other perfections. IV. God's power is only limited by His will.[b]

*The spendthrift turned miser* (*v.* 10).—A young man who ran through his patrimony, spending it in profligacy, was at length reduced to utter want and despair. He rushed out of his house intending to put an end to his life, and stopped on arriving at an eminence overlooking what were once his estates. He sat down, ruminated for a time, and rose with a determination that he would recover them. He returned to the streets, saw a load of coals which had been shot out of a cart on to the pavement before a house, offered to carry them in, and was employed. He thus earned a few pence, requested some meat and drink as a gratuity, which was given him, and the pennies were laid by. Pursuing this menial labour, he earned and saved more pennies; accumulated sufficient to enable him to purchase some cattle, the value of which he understood, and these he sold to advantage. He now pursued money with a step as steady as time, and an appetite as keen as death, advancing by degrees into larger and larger transactions, until at length he became rich. The result was that he more than recovered his possessions, and died an inveterate miser. When he was buried, mere earth went to earth. With a nobler spirit, the same determination might have enabled such a man to be a benefactor to others as well as to himself. But the life and its end in this case were alike sordid.[c]

## *PSALM THE SIXTY-THIRD.*

**author,—David**

*A Psalm of longing after God.*

Historical connection, 1 Sa. xxii. 5, xxiii. 14—16. Or, as some think, 2 Sa. xv. 23, 28, xvii. 16.

1—3. (1) **my God,** the term employed is *El*, the strong God, so the refuge of one who feels weak.[a] **early,**[b] the Heb. fig. for *earnestly.* **my flesh,** or body; *see* Ps. lxxxiv. 2. **longeth,** a peculiar word, denoting exhaustion and longing. **thirsty,** marg. *weary.* Some render, "and languishes, deprived as it is of water."[c] 2 Sa. xvi. 2—14, xvii. 29. (2) **to see,** lit. *thus have I seen;* thus earnestly and gladly.[d] **seen,** in the sense of realised, or experienced. (3) **better than life,** God's favour and grace are properly esteemed to be more important than prolonged life.

*Seeking God* (*v.* 1).—I. How should we seek God? 1. Intelligently; 2. Earnestly; 3. Constantly; 4. Hopefully. II. Where should we seek Him? 1. In the closet; 2. In His Word; 3. In the ordinances. III. When should we seek Him? 1. Early in life; 2. In advance of temporal things. IV. Why should we seek Him? 1. He is the soul's life; 2. His nature is communicative.[e]

*Early at worship* (*v.* 1).—It is said that the Jogers, or pilgrim saints of Ceylon, will take their station at the foot of the cypress, and there remain night and day, watching and watchful, heedless of sunshine or of storms, impelled by the tradition that the leaves of that ancient tree, falling only at distant and uncertain intervals, can, if gathered and eaten, restore the wasting frame to all the energies of youth. A plant of nobler growth has been sown in our world, the leaves of which never fade, nor are its fruits consumed. The latter are for meat and the former are for

*a* "The spirit and soul of the whole Book of Psalms is contracted into this Psalm." — *St. Chrysostom.*

*b* "The noun wh. signifies 'the dawn, the early morning,' and the verb 'to seek,' are both from the same root, meaning 'to break in,' and so to seek."—*Perowne.*

*c Jennings and Lowe.*

*d* "The two words 'strength' and 'glory' are associated with

medicine; and out of the heavenly sanctuary issue the waters which maintain their freshness. Not at long and unknown intervals do they descend. Regularly and ever weekly are they within our reach. Shall we think it an unwelcome task to tarry a few moments beneath the consecrated shade, while we await the first shaking of the blessing-laden boughs?[f]

4—8. (4) thus, comp. note on *v.* 2; with the old earnestness and affection.[a] lift . . hands, the usual Eastern attitude of prayer. Ps. xxviii. 2. (5) marrow and fatness, fig. allusion to the sacrifices of the tabernacle worship.[b] Dav. realises an inward spiritual joy in God, though separated from His worship. joyful lips, or lips of jubilee.[c] (6) when, or *as often as.* (7) shadow, *etc.*, Ps. xvii. 8. (8) followeth hard, in earnest seekings. Lit. *cleaveth to Thee.*[d]

*Following after God* (*v.* 8).—I. The state of mind here depicted. It includes—1. A persuasion that God alone is the portion of the soul; 2. A choice of God as that portion; 3. Ardent desires after nearness to God; 4. Earnest use of the means which have been appointed to bring us near. II. The reasons why this state of mind should be cultivated. 1. It forms a safeguard against temptation; 2. It supplies a perpetual stimulus to devotion; 3. It imparts an impulse to do good to ourselves and others; 4. It turns every religious service into a source of pleasure.[e]

*Seeking after God.*—

When first thy eyes unveil, give thy soul leave
To do the like; our bodies but forerun
The spirit's duty; true hearts spread and heave
Unto their God, as flowers do to the sun;
Give Him thy first thoughts, then, so shalt thou keep
Him company all day, and in Him sleep.

Serve God before the world: let Him not go
Until thou hast a blessing; then resign
The whole to Him, and remember who
Prevailed by wrestling ere the sun did shine:
Pour oil upon the stones, weep for thy sin;
Then journey on, and have an eye to heaven.[f]

9—11. (9) to destroy it, more correctly, *to their own destruction.* The tone of this and the following *v.* is somewhat painful to us.[a] lower parts, or *Sheol.*[b] (10) fall . . sword, *lit.* "they shall shed him (*i.e.* shed his blood) like water by means of the sword." foxes, or jackals, which feed on dead bodies. (11) the king, this expression seems to fix the connection to the Absalomic rebellion rather than to the persecution under Saul, at which time Dav. was not a recognised king. by him, *v.c.* God.

*Liar's prayer answered* (*v.* 11).—A certain poor widow, who lived in Galway, had a little cabin and a plot of potato ground, for which she paid three pounds a year. She had with difficulty collected enough money to pay her half-year's rent. She took her money to the bank, and got a thirty-shilling note in exchange for it. She gave this note to a neighbour, whom I shall call Brien, and asked him to pay her rent at the same time that he paid his own, and thus save her a long walk to the agent's office. This Brien promised to do. Some time afterwards a driver came from the agent, and asked the widow for her rent.

the ark of the covenant, 1 Sa. iv. 21; Ps. lxxviii. 61."—*Kay.*
*e W. W. Whythe.*
*f Miss Henderson.*

*a* "As I adored Thee in the sanctuary, and as I seek Thee now (*v.* 1), even so will I bless Thee throughout my life, which is only precious so far as it has the lovingkindness of God shining upon it."—*Spk. Com.*
*b* "Reference is immediately to the sacrificial meal wh. accompanied the thank-offering, here used as an image of thanksgiving."—*J. H. Michaelis.*
*c* Ps. xlii. 8, cxix. 55, cxlix. 5; Song Sol. iii. 1.
*d* "The strength of this clinging of the soul to God is tried and increased by absence of the external accessories of public worship."—*Wordsworth.*
*e G. Brooks.*
*f H. Vaughan* (1670).

*a* "What may be called the human force of character remains even amid thoughts whose impassioned earnestness is not of this world, and whose strain of intensely exalted spiritual fervour is such as but very few can reach."—*Perowne.*
*b* Ps. ix. 17.
*vv.* 9—11. *Dr. D. Featly, Clav. Inst.* 53.
*v.* 10. *P. Pyle,* i. 449.
*v.* 11. *T. Bradbury,* i. 335.

It is certain that the nearer we come to heaven or to a meetness for glory, the more we are impressed with the value and privilege of prayer.

*c W. C. Wilson, M.A.*

author,—David

*A prayer for deliverance fr. cunning and malicious enemies.*

*a* Ps. lv. 1, 2.
*b* A.-S. *hwettan*; Icel. *hvatir*; Ger. *wetzen*: to rub for the purpose of sharpening.
*c* "The allusion is to the mode of bending a bow by treading on it, here, and in Ps. lviii. 7, transferred to the arrows."—*Fausset.*
*d* Pr. i. 11.
*e* Trans. "They devise iniquities. They accomplish a cunning device; and each man's inward part and heart is deep."—*Revised Eng. Bible.*
*f Analyst.*
*g Bp. Hall.*

*a* "'And God shooteth at them an arrow suddenly, their wounds are there,' *i.e.* they are already wounded, the wounds are instantaneous."—*Spk. Com.*

*b Jennings and Lowe.*

Comp. Pr. xviii. 7.

*vv.* 5—9. *Sir A. Gordon*, 243.

*v.* 9. *Bp. Horne*, iv. 157.

She told him that she had sent it; and when Brien was applied to, he denied all that the widow had said. The widow could not raise the money to pay her rent a second time; and the agent told her that if she did not he must turn her out of her cabin. At last she took proceedings against Brien, in the hope of obliging him to give back her property. Before the magistrate he denied receiving the money; and when cross-questioned, he exclaimed. "I never did, I never did receive any money from the woman. May I drop down dead this minute, if ever I got any money from her!" That moment he fell dead. In the pocket of his coat was found a note bearing the marks which had been described by the widow.*c*

## *PSALM THE SIXTY-FOURTH.*

1—6. (1) in my prayer, or *meditation;* or, perhaps, *complaint.*[a] fear, including, of course, the danger that produced the fear. (2) insurrection, throng; noisy, tumultuous assembly; uproar. (3) whet,[b] or sharpen. bend, *etc.*, or, have aimed their arrow, lit. *tread* their bow.[c] (4) fear not, God who is on the side of the upright. (5) encourage, take every means to secure their object. commune .. privily, striving to secure secrecy for their plots.[d] see them, best referred to the snares they had laid. (6) search, *etc.*,[e] "the Psalmist hears them exulting in the secrecy of their plans, in the depth and subtlety of their thoughts.

*Omniscience ignored* (*v.* 3).—I. it is a fact that this notion has great influence upon the conduct of man. II. It is a fact that this notion is utterly untruthful and delusive. III. It is a fact that God has often in human experiences shown the delusiveness of this notion, and that the time is fixed for the complete demolition of its delusiveness. 1. Character is often seen through by man; 2. Retribution often follows men's deeds in the present world; 3. The future state will show what God saw.*f*

*The contentious.*—I never love those salamanders that are never well but when they are in the fire of contentions. I will rather suffer a thousand wrongs than offer one. I have always found that to strive with a superior is injurious; with an equal, doubtful; with an inferior, sordid and base; with any, full of unquietness.*g*

7—10. (7) shoot .. arrow,[a] comp. *vv.* 3, 4. (8) own tongue, the conseq. of their own slanders. all .. away, "all that gaze upon them shall shake the head."[b] (9) wisely considered, Job xxxiv. 26, 27. (10) glad, Ps. xxxii. 11.

*Mr. Finkle.*—On Saturday, April 11, 1821, a man named Finkle, of Steeple Morden, in the absence of his brother went into the stable, and taking a fine-spirited cart-horse, rode to the "Thrift" public house, situate on the road leading from Royston to Baldock, where he sat drinking until he became very much intoxicated. About six o'clock in the evening he ordered his horse: and, on mounting him, with horrid oaths and imprecations swore he would ride to hell. He had not gone many paces before the animal, from the improper conduct of his rider, became perfectly unmanageable, and rising upon his hind legs, fell backwards upon the unfortunate man, who was taken up senseless, the blood

gushing from his nose and ears. He was conveyed to the "Thrift" public house, where he lingered about an hour, and then expired. Who can read this awful account, and not say with David, "Verily He is a God that judgeth in the earth." Psa. lviii. 11. How dreadful, to be driven to hell by man's own wishes! Oh! consider this, ye that forget God, lest He take you away, and there be none to deliver.[c]

## *PSALM THE SIXTY-FIFTH.*

author,—unknown: date, prob. period of Sennacherib's invasion

*Praise for a bountiful harvest.*

**1, 2.** (1) **waited,** or is silent.[a] "To Thee silent r··signation is praise."[b] **Sion,** De. iv. 48. **vow,** made in troublous and anxious times. (2) **flesh,** all human beings.[c]

*The sacrifice of praise* (*vv.* 1—4).—We have—I. The features by which the true worshippers of God are distinguished. 1. Praise: it is frequently enjoined, reasonable in the highest degree, connected with much personal enjoyment, redounds to the glory of God; 2. Prayer: its import, its design; 3. Confession: spirit of penitence, of faith. II. The blessedness which the true worshippers of God enjoy. 1. They are objects of the Divine choice; 2. Favoured with Divine communications; 3. They are enriched with Divine communications and supplies.

*A minister's family* (*v.* 2).—The Rev. John Newton relates that many proofs had passed under his immediate notice of the faithfulness of God in answering the prayers of parents, who had left behind them young and helpless children. He especially mentions a friend of his, a laborious Christian minister, in the west of England, in whose family the Divine promise was fulfilled. This devoted man, when dying, was advised to make his will; but he replied, "I have nothing to leave but my wife and children, and I leave them to the care of my gracious God;" and soon after he died happily. No prospect appeared for the support of his family; but the Lord disposed a man, who had always despised his preaching, to feel for his destitute family, and by his means £1,000 were raised for them; and the clergy of Exeter, who had never countenanced his ministry, gave his widow a house and garden for her life, so that she afterwards lived in greater ease and plenty than in the lifetime of her husband.[d]

**3—7.** (3) **iniquities,** *Heb.* words, matters, or instances of iniquity, suggesting a long roll of sins, wh. crowd the memory of the Psalmist. **purge them away,**[a] lit. *cover them out of sight.* (4) **satisfied,** or full. **of thy holy temple,** or "with the holiness of thy temple."[b] (5) **by terrible,** *etc.*, so God's delivering acts are properly regarded.[c] **wilt thou,** or dost thou; the tense indicates continuous action. **confidence,** *i.e.* the object of confidence. **afar . . sea,** Heb. *sea of distant ones;* the dwellers on distaut coasts and islands. (6) **mountains,** the actual hills are fixed by Divine creative power. (7) **seas . . people,** the one being a figure of the other.[d]

*Consolation in God* (*v.* 3).—Let us notice—I. His complaint. 1. What are we to understand by the expression? 2. Who is there amongst us that has not reason to adopt the same language in reference to his own soul? II. His consolation. 1. From the free grace and mercy of God; 2. From the sufficiency of the means ordained by God. Apply:—(1) Acquaint yourselves with

*vv.* 9, 10. *Dr. I. Barrow,* i. 278.
*v.* 10. *Dr. J. Donne,* iii. 178.
*c R. T. S.*

*a* "Praise is fitly shown to Thee by a holy silence, more expressive than words. The silence implies a soul filled with thoughts too big for utterance; these at last untie the tongue; and the Psalm wh. follows is their expression."—*Spk. Com.*
*b* "What is intended is that submission or resignation to God wh. gives up its cause to God, and allows Him to act on its behalf."—*Delitzsch.*
*c* "God can no more divest Himself of His attribute of hearing prayer than of being."—*Calvin.*
*d R. T. S.*

*a* "*Thou* is emphatic. 'We are powerless to rid ourselves of our iniquities. Thou alone canst cover them and condone them.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*
*b* Ps. xxxvi. 8; Je. xxxi. 12, 14.
*c* De. x. 21; 2 Sa. vii. 23; Ps. cvi. 22, cxlv. 4.
*d* Ps. xlvi.

*v.* 3. *Sir A. Gordon,* 211; *Dr. H. Draper,* iii. 29.

your own ways, that you may be humbled; (2) And with God, that you may be at peace.[e]

*Restitution.*—Let no man think God will hear him if he do not make his brother amends for the wrong he hath done him. We have a story in our books of one Halyattes, that his soldiers did set on fire the corn of the Milesians, and that the fire, by the violence of the wind, caught hold of the temple of Minerva and burnt it down. It happened some time after this that Halyattes falls sick, and sends to the oracle to know what would be the success of his disease; but the messengers were told by the oracle that they must not expect any answer till the temple which they had burned were first repaired. Most certain it is that we shall have no return of our prayers from heaven, when we confess and beg the pardon of our sin, unless we do first make restitution where we have wronged our brother.[f]

8—10. (8) **tokens**, signs in nature of the Div. presence. **outgoings**, *etc.*, denoting the whole world:[a] "places where morning and evening have their birth."[b] (9) **waterest it**, marg. *after thou hadst made it to desire rain.* Or, *saturated it*, reference being to the refreshing effects of rain. **river of God**, so the Arabs still call *the rain.* Rain is spoken of as a brook or channel, with reference to the irrigation of the land by means of such. **so provided**, *i.e.* by the gracious rains. (10) **thou**, *etc.*, man raises ridges, etc., but Thou alone refreshest, and quickenest the life. **settlest**, term well describing the influence of genial rains.

*God's works of providence and grace* (*vv.* 9—13).—Consider the text as literally fulfilled in the blessings of God's providence. 1. He is the giver of all good: 2. His bounty ought to be gratefully acknowledged at this time. II. As emblematically describing the yet richer blessing of His grace. Note the influence of the Gospel—1. Upon the world at large: 2. Upon the souls of individual believers. Apply:—(1) Adore God for the blessings you have already received; 2. Look to Him for fresh and more abundant communications.[c]

*Works of God.*—

Wonderful indeed are all His works.
Pleasant to know, and worthiest to be all
Had in remembrance always with delight;
But what created mind can comprehend
Their number, or the wisdom infinite
That brought them forth, but hid their causes deep?
I saw when at His word the formless mass,
The world's material mould, came to a heap;
Confusion heard His voice, and wild uproar
Stood ruled, stood vast infinitude confined;
Till at His second bidding darkness fled,
Light shone, and order from disorder sprung;
Swift to their several quarters hasted then
The cumbrous elements, earth, flood, air, fire;
And this ethereal quintessence of heaven
Flew upward, spirited with various forms,
That roll'd orbicular, and turned to stars
Numberless, as thou seest, and how they move;
Each had his place appointed, each his course;
The rest in circuit walls this universe.[d]

*v. A. Dr. I. Watts*, i. 160; *S. Lavington*, i. 30.

*v. 5. Dr. J. Donne*, iii. 198; *H. Moir*, 144.

*v. 7. R. Fiddes*, ii. 327.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*f Kidder.*

*a* Comp. Arab expression, "The two Orients," to denote east and west.

*b* "Briefly *vv.* 5—8 may be summed up thus: the whole wide world, its mountains and its seas, and all the dwellers in the world from one end of it to the other, are in the hand of God, wait upon Him, and He makes all to rejoice."—*Perowne.*

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

"He that makes but one step up a stair, though he be not much nearer to the top of the house, yet he has stepped from the ground, and is delivered from the foulness and dampness of that. So, in this first step of prayer—O Lord, be merciful unto me—though a man be not established in heaven, yet he has stepped from the world and the miserable comforters thereof."—*Donne.*

*d Milton.*

11—13. (11) crowned, a bountiful harvest may well be spoken of as the "crown of the year." thy paths, Heb. *tracks of chariot-wheels.*[a] (12) wilderness, or *steppe:* patches of verdure in desolate wildernesses. little hills, summits of verdant hills. (13) covered over, so actually hidden by the rich harvest they bear. they shout, man's action being poetically applied to inanimate nature.[b]

*The spring* (*v.* 10).—Bible full of country life. Accuracy of its descriptions. The book meant for us who live on earth. I. Springing up. A sign of hidden life. No real death in winter. Life only concealed under ground, seen only by God, taken care of only by Him. A sign of increased life. At right time new power given. Take case of seed: God prepares the earth—air and rain reach down to the seed. Life stirs, changes, springs up. We know then that there is life; God knew it before. Some work goes on best in silence and darkness. A sign of coming life. Life must go on changing. There is hope, promise, pledge of something more; makes us look forward. II. The blessing. Earth, once cursed for man's sake; God blesses it year by year for His own sake. God's blessing guards the springing: young life tender. Guides it: no confusion, great variety; each kind of tree has its own kind of bud: differs in form and colour from other kinds. Beautifies it: all beauty a reflection of God's smile of blessing. Remember:—1. God's blessing must be looked for. Often there,—and we do not see it; search for it. 2. God's blessing comes with the spring. Spring comes every year, only once in the year. Take care not to lose it in its right time. 3. God's blessing specially needed by youthful hearts and minds, to guard, guide, and beautify their "springing up."[c]

## *PSALM THE SIXTY-SIXTH.*

1—4. (1) ye lands, all parts of the earth. (2) make . . glorious, lit. *make glory His praise.*[a] "Give glory as praise unto Him."[b] (3) terrible, *see* Ps. lxv. 5.[c] submit, *etc.*, lit. *lie, i.e.* yield feigned and reluctant obedience.[d] (4) all the earth, including its inhabitants.[e]

*Worship* (*v.* 4).—I. It is a man's duty to worship God, therefore man can attain to a true knowledge of God. II. God finds satisfaction and delight in human worship.[f]

*Beauties of creation.*—Doth not the pleasantness of this place carry in itself sufficient reward for any time lost in it? Do you not see how all things conspire together to make the country a heavenly dwelling? Do you not see the blades of grass, how in colour they excel the emerald, every one striving to pass his fellow, and yet they are all kept of an equal height? And see you not the rest of those beautiful flowers, each of which would require a man's wit to know, and his life to express? Do not these stately trees seem to maintain their flourishing old age, with the only happiness of their being clothed with a continued spring, because no beauty here should ever fade? Doth not the air breathe health, which the birds, delightful both to ear and eye, do daily solemnise with the sweet concert of their voices? Is not every echo thereof a perfect music? And those fresh and delightful brooks, how slowly they slide away, as loth to leave

*a* De. xxxiii. 26; Ps. xviii. 10; Is. lxvi. 15.

*b* "Nothing can be more beautiful, or more truly poetical, than the figure by wh. the valleys waving with corn are said themselves to shout and sing."—*Perowne.*

*v.* 11. *Mat. Henry,* 735; *A. Batty,* i. 71; *Dr. T. Amory,* 471.

*v.* 12. *Dr. J. Dupre,* ii. 84; *J. S. Cellerier,* i. 469. "People in passing fields or gardens, after a fine rain, say, 'Ah! how these fields and trees are laughing to-day.' 'Yes, you may well laugh; this is a fine time for you.' 'How nicely these flowers are laughing together.'"—*Roberts.*

*c* *Hive.*

**author,—unknown: date, not earlier than Hezekiah**

*Subject, celebration of God's great deeds on behalf of His people.*

*a* "Let His praise be such as will glorify Him, or be honourable to Him."—*Fausset.*

*b* *Delitzsch.*

*c* Re. xv. 3.

*d* Pr. Bk. Ver. "shall be found liars unto Thee."

*e* Ps. xxii. 27; Re. v. 13, vii. 9.

*v.* 3. *Dr. J. Donne,* iii. 224.

*v.* 4. *G. J. Zollikoffer,* i. 511.

*f* *R. W. Dale, M.A.*

*g Drake* (1629).

*a* "Such allusions are especially numerous about the time of the Babylonish captivity, but are too common and natural a topic to determine the date of this Psalm."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Heb. *nâhâr*, the river.

*c* Ps. xi. 4.

*d* Ps. ii. 12, lxviii. 18.

*e Dr. F. A. Cox.*

"Live not so much upon the comforts of God as upon the God of comforts. Ps. lxiii. 3."—*Mason.*

*f Sir W. Jones.*

the company of so many things united in perfection, and with how sweet a murmur they lament their forced departure.*f*

5—7. (5) come and see, or consider the story of ancient Israel, of wh. the Psalmist now reminds them. (6) turned . . laid, as at crossing of the Red Sea.*a* flood,*b* as distinct from the "sea," may refer to the river Jordan, crossed under the leadership of Joshua. there, or in those instances. (7) for ever, or continuously; the past does but illustrate the present. behold, or keep watch.*c* exalt themselves, or exhibit exultation.*d*

*Moral government* (*v.* 7).—I. My first purpose is to show the nature and design of moral government. God's government is one of—1. Sovereignty; 2. Of irresistible power; 3. Universal in its extent; 4. Essentially benevolent. II. I proceed now to two or three inferences deduced from these statements. 1. Disobedience to God is the great source of human misery: 2. The greatest exercise of benevolence consists in making known God; 3. We are greatly indebted to God for making known His will.*e*

*Creation the work of God.*—

The heavens are a point from the pen of His perfection;
The world is a rosebud from the bower of His beauty;
The sun is a spark from the light of His wisdom;
And the sky a bubble on the sea of His power.
His beauty is free from stain of sin,
Hidden in a veil of thick darkness.
He formed mirrors of the atoms of the world,
And He cast a reflection from His own face on every atom!
To thy clear-seeing eye whatsoever is fair,
When thou regardest it aright, is a reflection from His face.*f*

8—12. (8) ye people, or nations: the appeal being to surrounding nations. (9) holdeth . . life, *i.e.* keeps us in state of extreme peril.*a* moved, "He has not abandoned their foot to tottering unto overthrow."*b* (10) as silver is tried, the fig. of the purifying fires is common in Scrip.*c* (11) net, or poss. *prison-fortress*. The fig. of the hunter is, however, frequent in the Ps. affliction, or burden, like that laid on the horse or camel. (12) ride . . heads, as those wounded on a battle-field.*d* wealthy place, lit. *abundance, refreshment*.

*Stability the gift of God* (*vv.* 8, 9).—I. What a mercy it is to be upheld in the ways of God! 1. To how many snares and dangers we are exposed: 2. How many in like circumstances have fallen; 3. What would be the probable consequences of our falling? 4. What occasion have we given to God to let us fall. II. The duty of those who experience this mercy. 1. To acknowledge God in our steadfastness: 2. Bless and adore Him for His great goodness; 3. Walk humbly and carefully before Him; 4. Commit ourselves continually to Him. Here arise two questions:—(1) Are our souls really alive to God? (2) Have our feet been kept from falling?*e*

*Affliction.*—In the ancient times a box on the ear given by a master to a slave meant liberty; little would the freedman care how hard was the blow. By a stroke from the sword the warrior was knighted by his monarch; small matter was it to the newmade knight if the royal hand was heavy. When the Lord intends to lift His servants into a higher stage of spiritual life,

*a* "Places our soul in (the state) of life."—*Jennings and Lowe.*
*b Delitzsch.*
*c* Ps. xii. 6, xvii. 3; Is. xlviii. 10; Je. ix. 7; Eze. xxii. 20; Ze. xiii. 9; Mal. iii. 3; 1 Pe. i. 6, 7.
*d* "Cast down and trampled upon by the horse-hoofs and chariot-wheels of their triumphant and savage enemies."—*Peroune.*
*v.* 12. *T. Adams*, 606.
*e C. Simeon, M.A.*
"The Lord is a protection to those that call upon His name. The very calling upon His name is a running under God's wings, that is, putting ourselves 'under His shadow;' but when thou neg-

He frequently sends them a severe trial; He makes His Jacobs to be prevailing princes, but He confers the honour after a night of wrestling, and accompanies it with a shrunken sinew. Be it so: who among us would wish to be deprived of the trials if they are the necessary attendants of spiritual advancement?[f]

13—15. (13) **burnt offerings**, expressive of entire consecration. (14) **uttered**, lit. *opened*. The verb used elsewhere means "to talk at random," "to prattle."[a] (15) **fatlings**,[b] or fat lambs. **incense**, or ascending smoke. **bullocks with goats**, sparing no expense in the endeavour to present a worthy sacrifice.

*A good test.*—"I pay more attention." says Mr. Booth, "to people's lives than to their deaths. In all the visits I have paid to the sick during the course of a long ministry, I never met with one, who was not previously serious, that ever recovered from what he supposed the brink of death, who afterwards performed his vows, and became religious, notwithstanding the very great appearance there was in their favour when they thought they could not recover."[c]

16—20. (16) **come and hear**,[a] comp. v. 5. **my soul**, or life; with evident reference to some remarkable personal deliverance. (17) **extolled**, lit. *extolling was under my tongue:* meaning to say that honouring God was habitual. (18) **regard iniquity**, *i.e.* cherish it deliberately.[b] (19) **hath heard**, therefore it is plain that I have not cherished iniquity. (20) **from me**, *Heb.* from being (as it ever is) with me.

*The testimony of experience* (*v.* 16).—I. There are special blessings which God has conferred on every true Christian. 1. The pardon of sin; 2. Change of heart; 3. Victory over temptation; 4. Answers to prayer. II. Every true Christian delights to declare the blessings which God has conferred upon Him. 1. From gratitude to God; 2. A desire to do good to others; 3. For his own gratification and improvement. III. He prefers to declare those blessings to those who have a kindred experience. 1. As more willing to listen to his declaration; 2. As more qualified to appreciate it; 3. As more likely to derive advantage from it.[c]

*Death of Mr. Janeway.*—Mr. Janeway, when on his death-bed, was employed chiefly in praise. "Oh," said he to his friends, "help me to praise God; I have now nothing else to do. I have done with prayer and all other ordinances. Before a few hours are over I shall be in eternity, singing the song of Moses and the Lamb. I shall presently stand upon Mount Zion, with an innumerable company of angels, and spirits of just men made perfect, and with Jesus, the Mediator of the New Covenant. I shall hear the voice of much people, and with them shall cry, 'Hallelujah, glory, salvation, honour, and power, unto the Lord our God!' And again we shall say, 'Hallelujah!'" In this triumphant manner he expired, about the twenty-second year of his age.—*Praying and preaching.*—The pious George Herbert built a new church at Layton Ecclesia, near Spalding, and by his order the reading pew and pulpit were a little distance from each other, and both of an equal height; for he often said, "They should neither have precedency nor priority of the other: but that prayer and preaching, being equally useful, might agree like brethren, and have an equal honour and estimation."[d]

lectest that, thou dost wander abroad from Him."—*John Preston.*

[f] *C. H. Spurgeon.*

[a] "Its use may indicate that the vows were wrung fr. the nation by extraordinary distress."—*Delitzsch.*

[b] Le. iii. 3, ix. 14. *v.* 13. *T. Adams*, 622; *Dr. M. Hole*, 116. *vv.* 13, 14. *Dr. J. Edwards*, iii. 386. *v.* 14. *Hon. G. C. Percival*, i. 1.

[c] *Dr. Cheever.*

[a] Mal. iii. 16.

[b] Pr. xv. 8, 29, xxviii. 9; Is. i. 15; Jno. ix. 31.

*v.* 16. *J. Warneford*, ii. 135; *Dr. E. Payson*, i. 541; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 388.

*v.* 18. *Dr. R. South*, ix. 280; *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, iv. 229; *Dr. R. Gordon*, 415.

[c] *G. Brooks.*

"He who prays as he ought, will endeavour to live as he prays. Prov. xv. 8. He that can live in sin, and abide in the ordinary duties of prayer, never prays as he ought. A truly gracious, praying frame is utterly inconsistent with the love of or reserve for any sin. Ps. lxvi. 18."—*Owen.*

[d] *Whitecross.*

## PSALM THE SIXTY-SEVENTH.

author,—unknown: a Psalm of the later history

*Subject, desire that God should be universally acknowledged.*

1, 2. (1) God be merciful, Nu. vi. 24—26. (2) thy way, of dealing with Thy people. saving health, or salvations, deliverances, redeemings. nations, or Gentiles.[a]

*The calling of the Gentiles prayed for.*—The text shows us—I. That there are rich blessings yet in store for the Gentiles. II. What a union there is between piety and philanthropy. III. What encouragement we have for missionary exertions.[b]

*Stability of the Gospel.*—Like the treacherous signal-boats that are sometimes stationed by the wreckers off an iron-bound coast, the shifting systems of false religion are continually changing their places. Like them, they attract only to bewilder, and allure only to destroy. The unwary mariner follows them with a trembling uncertainty, and only finds out where he is when he feels his ill-fated vessel crashing into a thousand fragments on the beach. But how different from these floating and delusive systems is that unchanging Gospel of Christ, which stands forth, like the towering lighthouse of Eddystone, with its beacon-blaze streaming far out over the midnight sea! The angry waves, through many a long year, have rolled in, thundering against that tower's base; the winds of heaven have warred fiercely around its pinnacle; the rains have dashed against its gleaming lantern: but there it stands. It moves not, it trembles not; for it is "founded on a rock." Year after year, the storm-stricken mariner looks out for its star-like light as he sweeps in through the British Channel. It is the first object that meets his eye as he returns on his homeward voyage; it is the last he beholds, long after his native land has sunk beneath the evening wave. So is it with the unchanging Gospel of Christ. While other systems rise and fall, and pass into nothingness, this Gospel (like its immutable Author) is "the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." While other false and flashing lights are extinguished, this, the "true light," ever shineth.[c]

3, 4. (3) praise thee, turning fr. their idols to acknowledge Thee. (4) be glad, in realising the righteous rule of God. This may refer to the setting up of the righteous kingdom of Messiah. govern, marg. lead, or shepherd. Thou wilt be their guide. "A promise of peculiar graciousness, used elsewhere only of God's faithful and tried servants."[a]

*Action of the Gospel.*—It begins in the individual's heart, and secretly, silently, but powerfully, and without force, or fraud, or noise, it spreads, till the whole nature is penetrated by its influence, and assimilated to a new character. It is silent as the dew of heaven, but as saturating also. Like a sweet stream, it runs along many a mile in silent beauty. You may trace its course, not by roaring cataracts, and rolling boulders, and rent rocks, but by the belt of verdure, greenness, and fertility that extends along its margin. The fact is, all great forces are silent: strength is quiet: all great things are still; high brows are calm. It is the vulgar idea that thunder and lightning are the mightiest forces because they are the most audible. Gravitation, which is unseen and unheard, binds suns and stars into harmony, and puts forth a force vastly greater than that of the lightning. The

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*a* "In this, and the next ver., three distinct words are used to designate foreign nations; they are regarded under the various aspects of foreigners, races, and communities."—*Spk. Com.*

*vv.* 1, 2. *Dr. M. Hole,* ii. 54, iii. 670.

*vv.* 2, 3. *J. Howe,* vi. 313.

*b C. Simeon, M.A.*

*c T. L. Cuyler.*

*a Spk. Com. v.* 3. *H. Alford,* i. 334. *v.* 34. *Bp. Jewell,* ii. 1054: *T. Reynolds, Exstcheap Lect.* i. 50. "Praying frequently helps to praying fervently. Be assured, it is better to wander in prayer than to wander from it."—*Bp. Wilson.* "Prayer is thy buckler, prayer is the helmet that keeps thee safe; when a man neglects it, when he ceaseth to go to God by prayer, when he shows himself to be a stranger to the Lord by neglecting this duty, then he is out of

light, which comes so silently that it does not injure an infant's eye, makes the whole earth burst into buds and blossoms, and yet it is not heard. Thus, love and truth, the compound elements of the Gospel leaven, are silent, but mighty in their action—mightier far than hate and persecution, and bribes and falsehoods, and sword and musket. Souls are won not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts.[b]

5—7. (5) let, *etc.*, as *v.* 3. (6) increase, bountiful harvests being the gracious Div. testimony to a faithful and devoted people.[a] (7) fear, reverent, trustful fear.[b]

*A harvest sermon* (*v.* 6).—I. We may understand this of the material and physical increase of the earth. II. But we consider the text in reference to the spiritual increase of the earth. 1. There will be a reverent and befitting acknowledgment of God's majesty; 2. There will be a revenue of praise, which is God's due; 3. The prevalence of God's kingdom on the earth; 4. Of the joy and gladness of the people; 5. There will be the harvest of redeemed souls.[c]

*The harvest-field.*—No one can gaze upon these corn-fields without being influenced, more or less, by the pleasing associations with which they are connected. They strike their roots deep down into the soil of time; they are as old as the human race. They waved upon the earth long before the flood, under the husbandry of the "world's grey fathers." The sun in heaven has ripened more than six thousand of them. Progress is the law of nature, and everything obeys it, but the harvest exhibits little or no change. It presents nearly the same picture in this western clime and in these modern days as it did under the glowing skies of the East in the time of the patriarchs. We see the same old familiar scene now enacted under our eyes in every walk we take, which Ruth saw when she gleaned after her kinsman's reapers in one of the quiet valleys of Bethlehem, or which our blessed Saviour so frequently gazed upon when wandering with His disciples around the verdant shores of Genesaret. The harvest-fields are the golden links that connect the ages and the zones, and associate together the most distant times and the remotest nations in one common bond of sympathy and dependence. They make of the earth one great home; of the human race one great family; and of God the Universal Parent, to whom, day after day, we are encouraged to go with filial faith and love, not in selfishness and isolation, but in a fraternal spirit which embraces the whole world, asking not for ourselves only, but for all our brothers of mankind as well—"Our Father which art in heaven, give us this day our daily bread."[d]

the pale of His protection, like the conies that go out of their burrows; for so is the Lord to those that pray."—*J. Preston.*

*b Dr. Cumming.*

*a* Le. xxvi. 4. "The blessings of a fruitful harvest are mentioned as types of greater and spiritual blessings, under which all nations shall fear and love God."—*Fausset.*

*b* Ps. xxii. 27. *vv.* 6, 7. *E. Bickersteth, Blooms. Lect.* vi. 330.

*c J. Bennett.* "Those trees flourish most, and bear sweetest fruit, which stand most in the sun. The praying Christian stands nigh to God, and hath God nigh to him in all that he calls upon Him for, and therefore you may expect his fruit to be sweet and ripe; when another that stands as it were in the shade, and at a distance from God (through neglect of, or infrequency in, this duty) will have little fruit found on his branches, and that but green and sour."—*Gurnall.*

*d H. Macmillan.*

## *PSALM THE SIXTY-EIGHTH.*

author,—prob. David

1—3. (1) God arise, *comp.* Nu. x. 35. before him, marg. *from His face*, in dread of Him. (2) as smoke, before the wind.[a] as wax, Ps. xxii. 14. (3) exceedingly rejoice, Heb. *rejoice with gladness:* let them be glad with joy.

*Processional hymn to Adonai, the God of victories.*

*Christian joy* (*v.* 3).—The farthest that any of the philosophers went in the discovery of blessedness was but to come to that—to pronounce that no man could be called blessed before his death; not that they had found what kind of better blessedness

Historical connection, poss. either 2 Sa. viii., or 2 Sa. xi., xii

*a* "These figs.

may have been borrowed fr. the pillar of smoke and fire above the ark."—*Hupfeld.*

vv. 1, 2. *Ant. Farindon*, iii. 641; *Bp. Sheridan*, ii. 299.

vv. 1—3. *Dr. A. M'Caul*, 226.

*b Dr. Donne.*

*a Jennings and Lowe.* "The image is presented in the lit. rendering of a king travelling through the waste, for whom a way is made."—*Spk. Com.* Comp. Is. xl. 3, lvii. 14.

*b* Ex. vi. 3.

*c* Ps. cxlvi. 9.

*d G. Brooks. Gotthold's prayer.* "O God I have no desire to be anything but what Thou hast made me. I grudge not the great and mighty what Thou givest to them. Nay I know not that I would exchange my poverty for their wealth, my solitude for their lofty rank. One thing, however, I do implore: let me reign over the sin that dwells within me! Teach me to govern myself; and grant that I may one day be permitted humbly to enter that celestial city, welcomed by the holy angels and wearing the crown of life."

*e R. T. S.*

a The words of these vv. 4, 8, appear to be borrowed fr. the Song of Deborah, Ju. v. 4, 5.

they went to after death, but that still, till death, they were sure every man was subject to new miseries, and interruptions of anything which they could call blessedness. The Christian philosophy goes farther: it shows us a perfecter blessedness than any conceived for the next life also. The pure in heart are blessed already, not only comparatively, that they are in a better way of blessedness than others are, but actually, in a present possession of it; for this world and the next world are not, to the pure in heart, two houses, but two rooms—a gallery to pass through, and a lodging to rest in, in the same house, which are both under one roof, Christ Jesus. So the joy and the sense of salvation which the pure in heart have here is not a joy severed from the joy of heaven, but a joy that begins in us here, and continues, and accompanies us thither, and there flows on, and dilates itself to an infinite expansion.[b]

4—6. (4) **unto God, Elohim. sing praises, or harp His name. extol,** *etc.*, rend. "Throw ye up a way for Him that rideth through the desert steppes."[a] **Jah,** shortened form of Jehovah.[b] "God's eternal duration and power are the attributes wh. these names commemorate. (5) **fatherless . . widows,** the types of the utterly lonely and helpless.[c] **holy habitation,** heaven: from whence He regards their cry. (6) **solitary,** or desolate ones of *v.* 5. God provides for them homes. **bound,** as captives or prisoners. **dry land,** and so *fruitless.*

*The rebellious* (*v.* 6).—I. We are rebels against God. 1. God is our rightful sovereign; 2. We have renounced subjection to His authority; 3. We have leagued ourselves with His enemies; 4. We have refused to be reconciled to Him. II. As rebels against God we are heirs to misery. In our—1. Temporal circumstances; 2. Spiritual condition; 3. Eternal doom.[d]

*Rev. J. W. Fletcher.*—The Rev. J. W. Fletcher, of Madeley, and his wife, once visited Dublin for a few weeks. After his last sermon he was pressed to accept a sum of money as an acknowledgment for his important services. He firmly refused it, but his friends continued to urge it upon him. He, at length, took the purse in his hand, and said, "Well, do you really force it upon me? Must I accept of it? Is it entirely mine? And may I do with it as I please!" "Yes, yes," was the reply. "God be praised, then; God be praised," said he, casting his brimful eyes to heaven; "behold what a mercy is here! Your poor's fund was just out: I heard some of you complaining that it never was so low before. Take this purse. God has sent it you, raised it among yourselves, and bestowed it upon your poor. It is sacred to them. God be praised! I thank you, I heartily thank you, my dear kind brethren."[e]

7—10. (7) **when,** *etc.*, recalling the march out of Egypt. (8) **Sinai itself,** Ex. xix. 16, 18.[a] (9) **rain,**[b] prob. a poetical allusion to the sending of the *manna.* **thine inheritance,** so God's Israel was regarded. (10) **congregation,** better, *Thy creatures.* **therein,** even in the wilderness, through Thy providings. **prepared,** *i.e.* a table in the waste desert. **poor,** or weary wanderers.

*Rain in the desert* (*v.* 9).—Pitts, in his return to Egypt from Mecca, which he visited on a religious account, found rain in this desert. His words are as follows:—"We travelled through

a certain valley, which is called by the name of *Attash el Wait*, *i.e.* the river of the fire, the vale being so excessively hot that the very water in their goatskins has sometimes been dried up with the gloomy, scorching heat. But we had the happiness to pass through it when it rained, so that the fervent heat was much allayed thereby; which the hagges looked on as a great blessing, and did not a little praise God for it." This naturally reminds us of a passage in the 68th Psalm, ver. 9: "Thou, O God, didst send a plentiful rain, whereby Thou didst confirm Thine inheritance, when it was weary;" speaking of God's going before His people when they came out of Egypt, and entered upon their sojourning in this wilderness. The Mohammedan pilgrims that were with Pitts do not seem to have wanted water to drink, but the fall of rain, it seems, was highly acceptable to them on account of cooling the air in a place where, from its situation, it was frequently wont to be extremely hot.[c]

11—14. (11) **the word**, for attacking the foes, on taking possession of Canaan. **great**, *etc.*, Heb. "The women declaring good tidings were a great company."[a] (12) **flee apace**, Heb. *did flee. did flee.* **tarried . . spoil**, even the women sharing the leavings of the battle-field.[b] The expression is simply a fig. for the housewife. (13) **though**, *etc.*, a very difficult *v.* It seems to be the excited cry of the women after the victorious soldiers, promising them welcome when they come back to rest.[c] Others think a taunt is intended, like that of Deborah (Ju. v. 16). The dove's wings are an emblem of peace and prosperity. (14) **in it**, *i.e.* the land. **white . . Salmon**, covered with booty as Salmon[d] with snow.

*Housetops in Cairo.*—"The roofs are usually in a great state of litter, and were it not that Hasua, the seller of *geeleh*, gets a palm-branch, and makes a clearance once in a while, her roof would assuredly give way under the accumulation of rubbish. One thing never seemed cleared away, however, and that was the heaps of old broken pitchers, sherds, and pots, that in these and similar houses are piled up in some corner; and there is a curious observation in connection with this. A little before sunset, numbers of pigeons suddenly emerge from behind the pitchers and other rubbish, where they have been sleeping in the heat of the day, or pecking about to find food. They dart upwards, and career through the air in large circles, their outspread wings catching the bright glow of the sun's slanting rays, so that they really resemble shining 'yellow gold;' then, as they wheel round, and are seen against the light, they appear as if turned into molten silver, most of them being pure white, or else very light coloured. This may seem fanciful, but the effect of light in these regions is difficult to describe to those who have not seen it, and evening after evening we watched the circling flight of the doves, and always observed the same appearance. 'Though ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers with yellow gold' (Psa. lxviii. 13). It was beautiful to see these birds rising clean and unsoiled, as doves always do, from the dust and dirt in which they had been hidden, and soaring aloft in the sky till nearly out of sight among the bright sunset clouds. Thus a believer, who leaves behind him the corruptions of the world,

*v.* 10. *W. Enfield*, ii. 307; *H. Melville*, i. 221; *W. Gresley*, 361. "As a plaster cannot heal a wound if there be any iron sticking in the same; so prayer will not profit him anything who regards iniquity in his heart." — *Cawdray.*

*c Harmer.*

*a* "'They who published' are in the fem. gender in the original; they are like Miriams and Deborahs, and like the women who chanted David's victories."— *Wordsworth.* Ex. xv. 20; Ju. v.; 1 Sa. xviii. 6.

*b* "There is a wonderful irony in this description of the mighty monarchs fleeing and leaving the treasures of the camp to be shared among the women in the tents." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* "When ye return home and lie down among the folds, ye shall be very dove's wings — covered with silver, and with glittering yellow gold."

*d* A cowhill near Sichem, Ju. ix. 48.

*v.* 11. *J. Newton*, iv. 335.

*v.* 13. *A. Baker*, 158; *J. Marriott*, 217; *F. French*, 39.

*v.* 14. "Perhaps in allusion to the bones of the slaughtered foe, which were scattered about, and

lay bleaching on the summit of Salmon."
*e Whately.*

*a* Eph. iv. 18. *v.* 17. *Dr. J. Everard*, 367. *vv.* 17, 18. *W. Dealtry*, 354. *v.* 18. *Bp. Andrewes*, iii. 221; *V. Nelson*, 350; *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 247; *Dr. R. Fiddes*, 81; *J. Newton*, iv. 324; *A. Fuller*, 698; *A. W. Hare*, i. 289; *C. H. Monsell*, 344; *F. French*, 188; *Dr. H. Draper*, ii. 214.
*b G. Brooks.*
"Montserrat, in Spain, is an instance of a mountain deriving its name from its shape; as it is Mons Serratas, or a mountain whose craggy cliffs have, at a distance, the resemblance of the teeth of a saw. The Sierra Morena, in Spain, is named from its shape and colour."—*Burder.*
*c Dr. Dwight.*

*a* As Samson and Absalom.

*v.* 20. *Dr. J. Donne*, vi. 278; *C. Davy*, iii. 50.

*v.* 21. *Dr. T. Horton*, 122.

*b G. Brooks.*

*v.* 21. "This language, in the East, is equivalent to saying, 'I will kill you.' 'The king will soon break the *uche* (the scalp) of that fellow.' 'Tamban's *uche* is broken, he died last week.' 'Under the scalp is the royal wind, which is the last to depart after death.' 'With those who are and is rendered bright by the Sun of Righteousness shining upon his soul, rises higher and higher, nearer and nearer to the light, till, lost to the view of those who stay behind, he has passed into the unknown brightness above!"*c*

15—18. (15) high hill, or mountain of peaks. Bashan, country lying between the brook Jabbok and Mt. Hermon: rising to a height of 10,000 feet. (16) leap ye, in your pride, when Jehovah has chosen the comparatively insignificant hill of Zion. (17) thousands of angels, or thousands of repetition, thousands upon thousands. as in Sinai, so now in Zion. (18) hast ascended,*a* with poss. allusion to the taking of Mount Zion by David, and fuller reference to the ascension of Christ. for men, or of men, winning their allegiance. rebellious, who long opposed Thy sway.

*The Ascension* (*v.* 18).—I. The fact of our Lord's ascension. 1. The nature in which He ascended; 2. The place to which He ascended: 3. The circumstances in which He ascended. II. The conquests by which our Lord's ascension was signalised. 1. His conflict; 2. His victory; 3. His triumph. III. The benefits which flow from our Lord's ascension. 1. Their nature; 2. Their object; 3. Their design.*b*

*Gifts for the rebellious* (*v.* 18).—Turn your eyes to the heavenly world, and you will find millions of just such sinners walking in the light of eternal day. There you will find David, once an adulterer and a murderer; there you will find Paul, once a blasphemer and a persecutor: there you will find Peter, who denied his Master, and perjured himself; there you will find an endless multitude more, whose sins, drawn out in order and displayed in their proper colours, would overwhelm you as well as them with amazement and horror. "But they are washed, they are sanctified, they are justified in the blood of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God."*c*

19—21. (19) daily, *etc.*, better, "day by day beareth our burdens." (20) issues, or means of escape. (21) but, *surely.* head, hairy scalp, sign of youth and strength.*a*

*The God of salvation* (*v.* 19).—I. The relation which God sustains. God—1. Devised the plan of salvation; 2. Accomplished the work: 3. Applied the blessings; 4. And superintends the progress and final results. II. The benefits which God confers. 1. Their nature; 2. Their number: 3. Their frequency. III. The return which God deserves. 1. We should bless Him sincerely; 2. Affectionately; 3. Constantly: 4. Practically.*b*

*Fruits of war* (*v.* 20).—At Durham, 1346, there fell 15,000; at Halidon-hill and Agincourt, 20,000 each; at Bautzen and Lepanto, 25,000 each; at Austerlitz, Jena, and Lutzen, 30,000 each; at Eylau, 60,000; at Waterloo and Quatre Bras (one engagement), 70,000: at Borodino, 80,000: at Fontenoy, 100,000; at Yarmouth, 150,000; at Chalons, no less than 300,000 of Attila's army alone! The Moors in Spain, about the year 800, lost in one battle 70,000; in another, four centuries later, 180,000, besides 50,000 prisoners; and in a third, even 200,000. Still greater was the carnage in ancient times. At Cannæ, 70,000 fell. The Romans alone, in an engagement with the Cimbri and Teutones, lost 80,000. The Carthaginians attacked Hymera, in Sicily, with an army of 300,000 men, and a fleet of 2,000 ships and 3,000

transports; but not a ship nor a transport escaped destruction; and of the troops, only a few in a small boat reached Carthage with the melancholy tidings. Marius slew, in one battle, 140,000 Gauls, and in another, 290,000. In the battle of Issus, between Alexander and Darius, 110,000 were slain; in that of Arbela, 300,000. Julius Cæsar once annihilated an army of 363,000 Helvetians; in a battle with the Usipetes, he slew 400,000; and on another occasion, he massacred more than 430,000 Germans, who "had crossed the Rhine, with their herds, and flocks, and little ones, in quest of new settlements."[c]

22, 23. (22) **bring . . Bashan,** not God's people, but their enemies; even though fleeing fr. God they hide in inaccessible Bashan, or in the depths of the sea. (23) **may be dipped,** or red.

*Salvation is of God.*—Observe what happens when the cry rises at sea, "A man overboard!" With others on deck, you rush to the side; and, leaning over the bulwarks, with beating heart you watch the place where the rising air-bells and boiling deep tell that he has gone down. After some moments of breathless anxiety, you see his head emerge from the wave. Now that man, I shall suppose, is no swimmer; he has never learned to breast the billows; yet, with the first breath he draws, he begins to beat the water; with violent efforts he attempts to shake off the grasp of death, and by the play of limbs and arms, to keep his head from sinking. It may be that these struggles but exhaust his strength, and sink him all the sooner; nevertheless, that drowning one makes instinctive and convulsive efforts to save himself. So, when first brought to feel and cry, "I perish!" when the horrible conviction rushes into the soul that we are lost,—when we feel ourselves going down beneath a load of guilt into the depth of the wrath of God,—our first effort is to save ourselves. Like a drowning man, who will clutch at straws and twigs, we seize on anything, however worthless, that promises salvation. Thus, alas! many poor souls toil, and spend weary, unprofitable years in the attempt to establish a righteousness of their own, and find in the deeds of the law protection from its curse.[a]

24–27. (24) **thy goings,** or the solemn procession to Mount Zion, wh. God, represented by the ark, is supposed to lead. (25) **playing,** *etc.*, or beating the tambourine. Ex. xv. 20; Lu. xi. 34. (26) **fountain of Israel,** lineal descendants of Jacob.[a] (27) **there,** *etc.*, four tribes are mentioned as representative of the rest.

*Note on v.* 25.—This, no doubt, is a description of a religious procession in the time of David. In the sacred and domestic processions of the Hindoos they observe the same order, and have the same class of people in attendance. See them taking their god to exhibit to the people, or to remove some calamity; he is put into his car or tabernacle, and the whole is placed on men's shoulders. As they move along, the men and women precede, and sing his praises; then follow the musicians, who play with with all their might in honour of the god, and for the enjoyment of the people.[b]

28–31. (28) **thy strength,** *i.e.* thy dominion, or power. **strengthen,** *i.e.* perfect, and establish. (29) **because of thy**

*buried*, it remains three days in its place; but when the body is *burned*, it immediately takes its departure, which is a great advantage."—*Roberts.*

*c R. T. S.*

"As robbers, seeing a man flourishing his sword, will not then set upon him, even so the wicked spirits, seeing us fenced about by prayer, leave us unassaulted."—*Cawdray.*

Do not measure the efficacy of prayer by its length, but by its spirit and fervour; the proud Pharisee made a long prayer, the penitent publican a short one.

*a Dr. Guthrie.*

"Heaven is never deaf but when man's heart is dumb."—*Quarles.*

*a* "The patriarch Israel is the fountain fr. wh. the whole nation has issued as a stream."—*Perowne.* *vv.* 26–28. *A. Fuller*, 665. Prayer is the key of the day, and the lock of the night. And we should every day begin and end, bid ourselves good-morrow and good-night, with prayer. This will make our labour prosperous, and our rest sweet.

*b Roberts.*

*a* "The strongest nations are re-

presented by the strongest beasts." — *Faussett.*

*v.* 28. *Dr. W. Outram,* 33.

*v.* 30. *Bp. Hall,* v. 225; *J. C. Dieteric, Antiq.* 507; *Bp. Fleetwood,* 506.

*v.* 31. *E. Erskine,* iii. 473.

*b W. R. Williams.*

"We must ask for the spirit to pray with, and that not once or twice, but constantly, regularly, as for our daily bread; unceasingly, so as to take no denial. If we do this, God will from time to time pour down a fresh supply of that best gift of His, the spirit of grace and supplication." — *A. W. Hare.*

*c R. T. S.*

*a* De. x. 14; 1 Ki. viii. 27.

*b* Ps. cx. 2.

*v.* 35. *Bourdaloue,* ii. 356.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

If you do not get all you ask, it is because the Saviour intends to give you something better. The Christian's motto is, "Upward, onward, heavenward!"

"In securing answers to our own requests we must co-operate with the Lord. Some people ask him to do their work. 'Father,' said a little boy, after he had heard him pray fervently for the *poor* at family worship -'father, I wish I had your corn-crib'

temple, out of respect for. (30) company of spearmen, lit. *beasts of the reeds:* poss. the hippopotamus, as representing Egypt: or may be the crocodile.[a] bulls . . calves, fig. for rulers and people. submit, by rendering tribute. (31) stretch . . hands, with the offerings of submission.

*The prayer of the Church against those delighting in war* (*v.* 30).—I. We would first examine the question,—Is all war sinful? II. Next we would consider the class undoubtedly sinful, and here denounced, "who delight in war." III. And, in the last place, we would return to the punishment here invoked upon such from God—that they should be dispersed and reduced,—"scattered" by the whirlwind they have loved to raise and to ride.[b]

*Anthony Benezet* (*v.* 31).—On one occasion, during the annual convention of the Society of Friends, at Philadelphia, when that body was engaged on the subject of slavery, as it related to its own members, some of whom had not wholly relinquished the practice of keeping negroes in bondage, a difference of sentiment was manifested as to the course which ought to be pursued. For a moment it appeared doubtful which opinion would preponderate. At this critical juncture, Benezet, who was a leading member of the society, and felt a deep interest in the subject of emancipation, left his seat, which was in an obscure part of the house, and presented himself, weeping, at an elevated door in the presence of the whole congregation, whom he thus addressed: "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God." He said no more. Under the solemn impression which succeeded this emphatic sentence the proposed measure received the united sanction of the assembly.[c]

32—35. (32) sing, on account of God's marvellous doings. (33) heavens of heavens,[a] or the highest heavens. of old, before the creation of our present order of heavens and earth. voice, often used of God's thunder. (34) ascribe, make hearty acknowledgment. (35) out of, *etc.*, "the awful power of God being regarded as emanating from the sanctuary."[b]

*The character of God* (*v.* 35).—I. The description here given us of God—1. Most glorious: 2. Most endearing. II. The sentiments it should excite within us. 1. Gratitude; 2. Affiance. Apply:—(1) How little ground there is for the excuses of the presumptuous; (2) How little ground there is for the fears of the desponding.[c]

*God to be wholly worshipped.*—

Yea, even here as everywhere, let man
Worship his Recreator, and the world's,
Made perfect by preliminary fire.
O Thou who in the inaccessible depths
Dwellest of all-central Being, and of whom
We can but see the star-dust of Thy feet
Left on heaven's roads; from world nathless to world,
From firmament to firmament, can we trace
Each soul his individual link with Thee;
The pure invisible touch which makes us Thine;
The something more substantial than the sun,
More general than the void, yet nested here;
As through the aëry silence of the soul,
Swifter than eagle rushing on the wind,

Thou sweep'st into possession when Thou wilt.
So many are Thy mercies there is nought
But this to pray for left; continue that
Thou givest. To cease pertaineth not to Thee.
The elements may all confusedly fail,
And burning systems stiffen or depart
Into their graves of darkness and decay;
The sun at length exhausted in the strife
With his ethereal victor sleep and die;
And firmaments conglobe them, till at last
The universe concentrate in one orb,
Fit for Thy footstool only.[d]

'Why, my son?' 'Because then I would answer your prayers.'"—*T. L. Cuyler, D.D.*

*d Bailey.*

"I desire no other evidence of the truth of Christianity than the Lord's Prayer." — *Mad. de Staël.*

## *PSALM THE SIXTY-NINTH.*

author,—poss. David, prob. Jeremiah

*A prayer in affliction.*

*Shoshannim*, see Ps. xlv.

**1—3.** (1) waters, a familiar Heb. fig. for calamities.[a] unto my soul, as if endangering his life by drowning. Jno. ii. 5.[b] (2) deep mire,[c] lit. *mud of the abyss;* soft yielding morass. floods, Heb. *shibboleth*, the password given to test the Ephraimites.[d] (3) crying, with the cry of one in distress. dried, with constant calling. eyes fail, De. xxviii. 32. while I wait, better, waiting as I do.

*Sorrows and sufferings of Christ* (*vv.* 1—4).—I. Their overwhelming nature. 1. Those which were previous to His apprehension; 2. Those which He sustained during His trial; 3. Those which were consummated in His death. II. Their vicarious use. 1. It was not for His own sins; 2. It was for the sins of others. We see in this mystery—(1) The proper ground for faith; 2. The strongest motive for love; 3. The safest rule for obedience.[e]

*Sacredness of the Bible.*—Voltaire was once daring enough to versify that affecting penitential Psalm, the Fifty-first. Everything went well until he came to the tenth verse, where it is said, "Create in me a clean heart, O God!" But his pride, and infernal hatred against God and His worshippers, did not permit him, with the royal penitent, to entreat of God a pure and sincere heart: however, he strove to translate the verse poetically. But suddenly the terror of hell seized him: the pen refused to move beneath the hand of the reprobate who had indited so many blasphemies and obscenities for the destruction of innocence and the fear of God. He sought to flee, but could not. He fell half senseless on his couch, and afterwards confessed several times to his friends that he could never think of this appalling occurrence without inward tremor and uneasiness.[f]

*a* Ps. xviii. 16, xxxii. 6, lxvi. 12, lxxxviii. 17, cxxiv. 5; Is. xliii. 2; La. iii. 54.

*b* "The waters are said to rush in unto the soul when they so press upon the imperilled one that the soul, *i.e.* the life of the body, more especially the breath, is threatened."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* Ps. xl. 2.

*d* Ju. xii. 6; see Is. xxvii. 12, trans. "a stream."
See *J. Alting, Op.* ii. pars. 3, 125.

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

*f Dr. Van Esse.*

**4—7.** (4) hated . . cause, quoted by our Lord, Jno. xv. 25.[a] hairs, *etc.*, comp. Ps. xl. 12. are mighty, or *are in great force.* The suggested corrections, *more than my bones*, or *more than my locks*, are unnecessary. then . . away, a proverbial expression, "Wrong that I have not done I must even suffer for."[b] (5) foolishness, such confession is suitable to the Psalmist, though some think he speaks here ironically,[c] or hypothetically,[d] or merely of the consequences and punishments of sin.[e] (6) ashamed for my sake, or on account of my sufferings: lit. *in me.* (7) thy sake, comp. Je. xv. 15.

*Christ the Restorer* (*v.* 4).—Assert and prove that this was Christ. I. What did Christ restore to God and to man? I. To

*a* "What was true, in some sense, of the suffering Israelite under the law, was still more true of Him in whom was no sin, and whom therefore His enemies did indeed hate without cause."—*Perowne.*

*b* Je. xv. 10.

"That which I stole not I must then restore."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c Calvin.*

*d Dathe.*

*e Ewald.*

"In the undeserved persecution which he endures at the hand of man, he is obliged nevertheless to recognise well-merited chastisement fr. the side of God."—*Delitzsch.*

*c. 4. T. Cruso,* 217; *E. Erskine,* iii. 133.

*f J. Ryland.*

"There are many locks in my house, and all with different keys, but I have one master-key which opens all. So the Lord has many treasuries and secrets all shut up from carnal minds with locks which they cannot open; but he who walks in fellowship with Jesus possesses the master-key which will admit him to all the blessings of the covenant; yea, to the very heart of God. Through the Well-beloved we have access to God, to heaven, to every secret of the Lord."—*Spurgeon.*

*a* Job xix. 13; Ps. xxxi. 11; Is. liii. 3; Jno. i. 11; vii. 5.

*b* Mat. x. 35, 36.

*c* Je. xx. 8, 9; Jno. ii. 17.

*d* "This portion of the Ps. has no direct bearing upon our Lord's life. No such external demonstrations of sorrow, no fasting, no sackcloth, gave occasion to revilings in His case; on the contrary, God,—The obedience and honour of the broken law; satisfaction to truth, purity, and justice; harmony, order, and beauty to all His injured perfections; 2. To man,—True knowledge of God, lost image of God, peace, right to all temporal enjoyment, victory over enemies, strength for moral acts, heaven. II. The manner in which He proceeded: by covenant engagement; by His incarnation; by His Gospel. III. Reflections. 1. How great a Saviour is Christ; 2. How miserable Christless souls; 3. What comfort to a weak believer; 4. Salvation in none but Him; 5. Trust and rejoice in Christ.*f*

*Answers to prayer.*—A little girl, about four years of age being asked, "Why do you pray to God?" replied, "Because know He hears me, and I love to pray to Him." "But how d you know He hears you?" Putting her little hand to her heart she said, "I know He does, because there is something here that tells me so."—*Bishop Atterbury.*—Dr. William King, in the *Anecdotes of His Own Times*, writes: "In 1715, I dined with the Duke of Ormonde, at Richmond. We were fourteen at table. There was my Lord Marr, my Lord Jersey, my Lord Arran, my Lord Lansdown, Sir William Wyndham, Sir Redmond Everard, and Atterbury, Bishop of Rochester. The rest of the company I do not exactly remember. During the dinner there was a jocular dispute—I forget how it was introduced—concerning short prayers. Sir William Wyndham told us that the shortest prayer he had ever heard was the prayer of a common soldier, just before the battle of Blenheim; 'O God, if there be a God, save my soul, if I have a soul!' This was followed by a general laugh. I immediately reflected that such a treatment of the subject was too ludicrous, at least very improper, where a learned and religious prelate was one of the company. But I had soon an opportunity of making a different reflection. Atterbury seeming to join in the conversation, and applying himself to Sir William Wyndham, said, 'Your prayer, Sir William, is indeed very short; but I remember another as short, but a much better, offered up likewise by a poor soldier in the same circumstances: 'O God, if in the day of battle I forget Thee, do Thou not forget me!' This, as Atterbury pronounced it with his usual grace and dignity, was a very gentle and polite reproof, and was immediately felt by the whole company: and the Duke of Ormonde, who was the best bred man of his age, suddenly turned the discourse to another subject."

8—12. (8) **stranger**, or estranged.*a* **alien**, Ex. xviii. 3.*b* (9) **zeal**, *etc.*, "jealousy for Thine house hath consumed me."* Reference may be to the profaned and neglected condition of the sanctuary, if Jeremiah wrote the Psalm. **reproaches**, *etc.*, Ro. xv. 3. (10) **when**, *etc.*, Psalmist refers to acts of devotion and religion, wh. his enemies turned to his reproach.*d* (11) **sackcloth**, the Eastern outward symbol of deep sorrow and repentance.*e* **proverb**, or byword. His serious religious acts were made subjects of ridicule. (12) **sit in the gate**, the loungers. **song**, *etc.*, Job xxx. 9.

*Zeal for the house and service of God* (*v.* 9).—Dr. John Hacket was, at the beginning of the civil war, rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn; and when the Parliament had forbidden the use of the liturgy under the severest penalties, Dr. Hacket continued to read it as before. On one occasion a sergeant with a trooper

rushed into the church, commanding him with threats to desist; but with a steady voice and intrepid countenance he continued, on which the soldier, raising a pistol to his head, threatened him with instant death. The undaunted minister calmly replied, "Soldier, I am doing my duty; do you do yours!" and with a still more exalted voice read on. The soldier, abashed, left the church.[f]

13–15. (13) acceptable time, lit. *time of good pleasure.*[a] (14) mire, as *v.* 2. waters, as *v.* 1. (15) waterflood, *v.* 2. pit, or well with stone coping and cover.[b] shut, *etc.*, one covered in such a well or pit would be buried alive.

*Encouragements to prayer.*—I. "Why should I pray?" Why does a beggar beg? Why does a drowning man cry out? Some one has said, "You must pray or perish." Not that prayer can save us; only Jesus can do that. Prayer only asks salvation. Let us speak of some of the encouragements to prayer. 1. God commands it. It is our duty. (Quote texts.) 2. God hears and promises to answer prayer. The promises of God's Word. 3. God delights in His people's prayers. Parents like to hear their children's requests; so does our Father in heaven. He delights even in His little ones. 4. All the good and holy, in all ages, have loved prayer. (Scripture examples.) 5. Past answers to prayer should encourage us. Praying breath is never wasted. What prayer did for Jacob, Moses, the Israelites, and Jehoshaphat, we have lately seen; so it has been in later days, and is now. Do you pray? Have you ever prayed? Will you begin this very day?[c]

*Prevailing prayer.*—Mr. Samuel Rutherford one day left his house at Anwoth to go to the neighbouring town of Kirkcudbright, the next day being a day of humiliation in that place. He turned his steps to the house of a friend, Provost Fullarton, whose wife was Marion M'Naught. While sitting with them, a knock at the door was heard, and then a step on the threshold. It was worthy Mr. Blair, who, on his way from London to Portpatrick, had sought out some of his godly friends, that with them he might be refreshed ere he returned to Ireland. He told them, when seated, that he had a desire to visit both Mr. Rutherford at Anwoth, and Marion M'Naught at Kirkcudbright, but not knowing how to accomplish both, he had prayed for direction at the parting of the road, and laid the bridle on the horse's neck. The horse took the way to Kirkcudbright, and there he found both the friends he so longed to see. It was a joyful and refreshing meeting on all sides.[d]

16–18. (16) good, in the sense of sweet and comforting.[a] (17) hide not, Ps. xvii. 8. speedily, Heb. *make haste to hear me.*[b] (18) because . . enemies, *i.e.* lest my enemies should glory in my prolonged distress.[c]

*God's nearness to the soul* (*v.* 18).—I. In what relations? 1. As a Father and Friend; 2. As a Guide and Guardian; 3. As a Redeemer and Portion. II. In what circumstances? 1. In reading the Bible; 2. In prayer; 3. In religious ordinances; 4. In affliction and death. III. For what end? 1. To establish communion with the soul; 2. To repel evil from the soul; 3. To prepare the soul for heaven.[d]

*The influence of habits of prayer.*—In the school at Octavoulin,

trary, He was reproached for neglecting them."—*Spk. Com.*

*e* Ps. xxxv. 13.

*v.* 9. *Bp. Jewell*, ii. 1004. *J. R. Pitman*, 239

*f R. T. S.*

*a* Ps. xxxii. 6; Is. xlix. 8, lv. 6; 2 Cor. vi. 2.

"But I pray to Thee, O Jehovah! A time of favour, O God, through the abundance of Thy mercy."—*Hengstenbery.*

*b* "A dug pit usually with water in the bottom."—*Stanley.*

*v.* 14. *P. Waldo, Lect. by Berens*, 254.

*c J. H. Wilson.*

A credible historian informs us that about one hundred and fifty years ago there was an earthquake in Switzerland, which precipitated part of a mountain upon a village that stood beneath it, and crushed every house and inhabitant to atoms, except the corner of one cottage, where the master of the house, with his poor family, were together praying unto God.

*d Whitecross.*

*a* "This appeal to God's tender mercy shows how great was the strait of the holy prophet."—*Calvin.*

*b* Ps. xl. 17.

*c* "The honour of the all-holy One cannot suffer the enemies of the righteous to triumph over him."—*Delitzsch.*

*d G. Brooks.* A drop of acid no larger than a tear in a percussion cap, with a piece of zinc as small as a child's finger-nail, will make enough electricity to send a dispatch beneath the ocean to Europe and back again. *e R. T. S.*

in the island of Islay, there was, in 1825, a boy of fourteen years of age who exhibited an intimate acquaintance with the leading doctrines of Christianity. He was in the habit of searching the Scriptures daily, and was frequently observed by his neighbours to retire to lonely places for devout meditation and prayer. On one of these occasions a thoughtless man contrived, without being perceived, to follow him, and overheard him pray. He was struck with astonishment at the simple yet elevated language he used; he burst into tears, and afterwards acknowledged that he never knew what it was to be humbled under a sense of his own sinfulness until he heard that boy pray at the side of a wall.[e]

*The power of prayer.*—Prayer, like a key, opens to us the knowledge of—I. God. None understand Him but those who go to be enlightened by Him. II. Ourselves. The nearer we go to God the more clearly do we see ourselves. III. The glory of the natural world. Through prayer, we rejoice in the works of God. IV. Heaven. No hill on earth is so near to heaven as the mount of prayer to God. Learn—Prayer is within the reach of all.[f]

*f Dr. S. F. Smith.*

19—21. (19) **reproach**, *etc.*, *vv.* 7—12.[a] (20) **broken my heart**, expression of the deepest grief. **take pity**, or sympathise; lament with me.[b] (21) **gall**, Heb. *rosh*. Some bitter substance; precisely what cannot be ascertained. **vinegar**, sour wine. Comp. Matt. xxvii. 34, 48.

*Vinegar* (*v.* 21).—The refreshing quality of vinegar cannot be doubted; but a royal personage had reason to complain of his treatment in having this only presented to him to quench his thirst, when it was only made use of by the meanest people. Pitts tells us that the food that he and the rest had when first taken by the Algerines, was generally only five or six spoonfuls of vinegar, half a spoonful of oil, a few olives, with a small quantity of black biscuit, and a pint of water a day. The juice of lemons is what those of higher life now use, and probably among the higher orders the juice of pomegranates might be used to produce a grateful acidity.[c]

*a* "In the certainty that all his sorrows, fears, sicknesses, reproach, sufferings, are known to God, the Psalmist again finds his consolation."—*Peronne.*
*b* "The expressions of this and the foll. *vv.* should be compared with the account of our Lord's final suffering. Mat. xxvi., xxvii.
*c Harmer.*

22—26. (22) **table**, the emblem of prosperity. Their table, with all its sumptuousness and luxury.[a] (23) **darkened**, comp. *v.* 3. **loins . . shake**, expressive of terror, dismay, and feebleness.[b] (24) **wrathful anger**, these combined words indicate the strength of the Psalmist's feeling. They must be carefully and judiciously used when applied to God. (25) **habitation**, Heb. term refers to the circular enclosure for cattle. It may be used to include their house and possessions. (26) **persecute**, *etc.*, those under the judgment of God may surely expect the pity and sympathy of man.[c]

*a* "And to them when at their ease, [let it become] a trap."—*Jennings and Lowe.* Ps. xxiii. 5.
*b* Da. v. 6.
*c* 2 Chr. xxviii. 9; Job xix. 21; Is. liii. 4.

*God a deliverer.—The miners of Wales.*—There are many coalpits in the Principality. There are men down there who hardly have a gleam of sunlight. How are they to get up? There is a string at the bottom, they pull it, a bell up at the top rings, a rope, worked by a steam-engine, is let down, and in this way they ascend to the top. A man gets down into the pit of trouble; he cannot get up himself; he must ring the bell of prayer, and God will hear it, and send down the rope that is to lift him out of it.[d]

*vv.* 22, 23. *J. R. Pitman*, 215. "When you are reading a book in a dark room, and find it difficult, you take it to a window to get more light. So take your Bibles to Christ." —*M'Cheyne.*
*d T. Jones.*

27—30. (27) **add iniquity**, or *punishment*, the fitting consequence of their iniquity.[a] **come . . righteousness**, so as to

*a* "There is no stronger male-

escape the judgment on their sins. (29) **blotted**, *etc.*, a very painful prayer. **book of the living**, fig. from the registers of citizens.[b] (29) **on high**, 2 Pet. v. 6. (30) **magnify**, *etc.*, Ps. l. 14.

*Lesson on prayer.—A manual for Bible-class teachers.*—I. For whom are we to pray? For saints, Eph. vi. 18; rulers, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; ourselves, Gen. xxxii. 11; brethren, James v. 16; ministers, 2 Thes. iii. 1; enemies, Matt. v. 44; all men, 1 Tim. ii. 1, 2; posterity, John xvii. 20; not for the dead, 2 Sam. xii. 23; for sick, James v. 13, 14, 15. II. For what things are we to pray? God's glory, Matt. vi. 9; the Church, Ps. li. 18, cxxii. 6; Christian labourers. Matt. ix. 38; wisdom, James i. 5; the Holy Spirit, Luke xi. 3; food, Matt. vi. 11; forgiveness, *id.* 12; deliverance from evil, *id.* 13; a pure heart, Ps. li. 1, 2, 6, 7, 9, 10; anything lawful. 1 John v. 14. III. How are we to pray? In devout attitude, Ps. xcv. 6; feeling our unworthiness, Gen. xviii. 27; our need, Ps. lxxxvi. 1; our sinfulness, Luke xviii. 13; contritely, Ps. li. 17; with understanding, 1 Cor. xiv. 15; faith, James i. 6; sincerity, Heb. x. 22; Ps. xvii. 1; fervency, James v. 16; loving spirit, 1 Tim. 2, 8; perseverance, Eph. vi. 18; Luke xviii. 1; submissively, Matt. xxvi. 39; secretly, Matt. vi. 6; pointedly, *id.* 7; frequently, 1 Thes. v. 17; regularly, Dan. vi. 10; socially, Acts i. 14; publicly, Acts iii. 1; Ps. cxxii. 1, 4, cxvi. 14; with thanksgiving, Phil. iv. 6; sweet "hour of prayer," Acts iii. 1.

*The dying master and his slave.*—The conscience of the sinner, when aroused, not only accuses himself but his accomplices also. A rich southern gentleman, careless about his soul, used often to invite his minister, a worldly man and a mere hireling, to hunt, drink wine, play cards, and join parties of pleasure with him. The poor worldling was taken sick, and his case was pronounced dangerous. His mind was terribly agitated; he felt unprepared to die. His physician asked him one day if he would not send for his minister to converse with him, and offer prayer in his behalf? No, he had no confidence in him: he could hardly bear the mention of his name. He had a poor pious negro servant by the name of Ben. The master had sometimes overheard him at prayer. "Call for Ben," said he. He came. "Ben," said the dying man, "can't you pray for your poor master?" Down he fell on his knees, and pleaded for the salvation of the sinner's soul; and the prayer, we hope, was answered.[c]

**31—33.** (31) **horns and hoofs**, marking his age, as not under three years, and also as being ceremonially clean.[a] (32) **humble**, meek. **heart shall live**, *see* Ps. xxii. 26. (33) **prisoners**, those who suffer oppression and persecution for His sake.

*Humble souls encouraged* (*vv.* 32, 33).—The records of God's people, as contained in the sacred oracles, are encouraging. I trust that many of you are seeking after God: if so, God promises that your heart shall live. Let not any be discouraged on account of his poverty, nor despond if he feels like a prisoner under sentence of death. Let those who are not seeking God commence without delay.[b]

*Note on v.* 31.—Dr. Boothroyd, "For this will be more acceptable to Jehovah than a full-horned and a full-hoofed steer." Buffaloes which are offered in sacrifice must always be full-grown, diction to be found in the Old Testament, unless that in Ps. cix. be considered more virulent. Neither can we say anything in palliation of the bitter spirit it reveals."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Je. xxii. 30; Ez. xiii. 9.

It is recorded of the Duke of Ormond, in the 17th century, that he never prepared for bed, or went abroad in a morning, till he had withdrawn for an hour into his closet.

"The Romans in a great district were put so hard to it, that they were fain to take the weapons out of the temple of their gods to fight with them; and so they overcame. This ought to be the course of every true Christian, in times of public distress, to fly to the weapons of the Church—prayers and tears. The spartans' walls were their spears, the Christian's walls are his prayers."—*Spencer.*

*c Cheever.*

*a* Le. xi. 3.

v. 33. *Bp. Van Mildert*, vi. 305.

Cornelius Scipio, the great Roman general, when once he had assumed the toga, never undertook any affair of importance without having passed some time alone in the temple of Jupiter Capitolinus.

*b C. Simeon, M.A.*

"If you have the sun, you have the rays—if you have the fountain, you have all the living stream. If the Lord is yours, all things are yours."—*Stanford.*
*c Roberts.*

God looks not at the pomp of words and variety of expressions, but at the sincerity and devotion of the heart. The key opens the door not because it is gilt, but because it fits the lock.
*a Delitzsch.*
*b J. Evans.*

"No man can hinder our private addresses to God; every man can build a chapel in his breast, himself the priest, his heart the sacrifice, and the earth he treads on the altar."—*Jeremy Taylor.*
*c Cowper.*

and must have their horns and hoofs of a particular size and shape. Those without horns are offered to devils. Thus, it is difficult and expensive to procure a victim of the right kind. The writer of this Psalm is supposed to have been a captive in Babylon, and consequently poor, and otherwise unable to bring an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord; but he rejoiced to know that He "heareth the poor, and despiseth not His prisoners;" and that praising "the name of God with a song," and magnifying Him with thanksgiving, would be more acceptable than the most perfect victim offered to Him in sacrifice.[c]

34—36. (34) moveth, or creepeth. (35) save Zion, expression suitable to the time of the exile. build, or rebuild. (36) seed, *etc.*, "the young, God-fearing generation, the children of the servants of God among the exiles."[a]

*The creation praising God* (*v.* 34).—Praise is due to God on account—I. Of what He is in Himself. II. Of what He is in His relations. III. Of what He has accomplished. IV. Of His wonderful gifts. V. Of His grand discoveries.[b]

*Nature praising God.*—

Not a flower
But shows some touch, in freckle, streak, or stain,
Of His unrivall'd pencil. He inspires
Their balmy odours, and imparts their hues,
And bathes their eyes with nectar, and includes,
In grains as countless as the seaside sands,
The forms with which He sprinkles all the earth.
Happy who walks with Him! whom what he finds
Of flavour or of scent, in fruit or flower,
Of what he views of beautiful or grand
In nature, from the broad majestic oak
To the green blade that twinkles in the sun,
Prompts with remembrance of a present God.[c]

author,—see Ps. xl., of which this seems to form a part

*Prayer of a persecuted saint.*

*Title,* comp. Ps. xxxviii.
*a* Ps. lxxi. 12.
*b* Ps. cxli. 1; 2 Co. i. 10.
*v.* 1. *Dr. M. Hole,* i. 153.
*v.* 4. *W. Butcher,* ii. 285; *R. W. Dibdin,* 60.
*c C. Simeon, M.A.*
"The vitality of the Church could be continued, though the man of talent and learning should be removed, as the body may

## *PSALM THE SEVENTIETH.*

1—5. (1) O God, *Elohim.* to help me, Heb. *to my help.*[a] (2) my soul, or life. desire my hurt, or delight in my misfortune. (3) reward of their shame, lit. *upon the heels of;* on account of. shame, disgraceful conduct; or attempts to put me to shame. (4) God, *Elohim:* term *Jehovah* is used Ps. xl. 16. (5) no tarrying, God never does tarry, but He often seems to His saints so to do.[b]

*The Christian's frame of mind* (*vv.* 4, 5).—I. Point out that frame of mind which the Lord's people are privileged to enjoy. It is one of—1. Sacred joy; 2. Of grateful adoration. II. Give some directions to those who have not as yet been able to attain to it. 1. Lie low before God in the deepest humiliation; 2. Importune Him with all earnestness to grant you this frame; 3. Plead with Him your entire dependence on His power and grace. Apply:—(1) See that the Christian's character be yours; (2) See that ye walk worthy of that character.[c]

*A beautiful envelope.*—A poor servant girl in London, who had attended the ragged schools and received spiritual as well as mental benefit from them, one evening at the close of the school put into the minister's hand, much to his surprise, a note con-

taining a half-sovereign. Her entire wages were only eight pounds a year. She offered this as a thanksgiving tribute to God for the blessings received from the schools, very modestly remarking that it was not much. "But, sir," said she, "I have wrapped it up with an earnest prayer and many tears." Here is, indeed, a most rare and beautiful envelope. Would that our offerings, as we lay them before God's altar, were more generally enclosed in such golden envelopes. "An earnest prayer and many tears." Assuredly she shall be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.[d]

live when the arm or the leg is amputated; but that vitality could not continue if the saint of humble and retiring piety, and of fervent prayerfulness, were removed, any more than the body can live when there is no heart and no lungs."—*Barnes.*

*d Old Jonathan.*

## *PSALM THE SEVENTY-FIRST.*

author,—unknown: poss. David, poss. Jeremiah

*Prayer of a grey-headed servant of God.*

**1—5.** (1) **in thee**, *etc.*, see Ps. xxxi. 1—3. (2) **in thy righteousness**, which ensures faithfulness to gracious promises of defence and help. (3) **strong habitation**, for a rock of habitation, or stronghold on a rock.[a] **resort**, when danger threatens. (4) **unrighteous**, *etc.*, the godlessness of the ways of his enemies seems most to have impressed the Psalmist. (5) **hope**, or confidence, reliance.[b]

*God a habitation to His people* (*v.* 3).—Consider—I. The sentiment propounded. 1. The condescension of God in suffering Himself to be so addressed; 2. The comfort which man derives from this view of the Deity. II. The petition urged. 1. The wisdom of it; 2. The piety of it. Address—(1) Those who have never yet had these views of God; 2. Those who have resorted to Him under this character.[c]

*Prayer amidst business.*—[The lesson embodied in the following anecdote is not the less valuable that the person it relates to was a Roman Catholic dignitary. It is consoling to think that there are Romanists whom grace has taught to dig beneath the superstitions of their Church to rest on a covenant God in Christ.] "We had occasion once to speak to him upon the subject of ejaculatory prayer, and the sanctification of the daily routine or turmoil, whichever it may be, of life. 'Well,' he said, 'I'll give you my prayer. I have used it for over thirty years, and I may say it is scarcely ever out of my thoughts when I am at work. When engaged upon anything anxious, or even pausing in a letter, the words come up to me again and again. Here they are: I'll write them down for you, and you may try them: "*Deus meus, Deus meus, nihil sum; sed Tuus sum.*" (My God, my God. I am nothing; but I am Thine.) They help me through everything.'"

The expressions are borrowed largely from other Ps. esp. the xxii., xxxi., xxxv., xl.

*a* De. xxxiii. 27.
*b* Je. xiv. 8, xvii. 13, 1. 7; 1 Ti. i. 1; Col. i. 27.
*v.* 1. *M. Clarke*, 101.
*vv.* 1, 2. *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 351.
*v.* 4. *V. Nalson*, 202.
*v.* 5. *J. Slade*, vii. 255.
*vv.* 5, 6. *Dr. S. Eaton*, 162.
*c C. Simeon, M.A.* "In prayer it is better to have a heart without words than words without a heart."—*Bunyan.*

**6—9.** (6) **holden up**, as in a mother's arms.[a] (7, 8) **wonder**, prob. as suffering so severely under God's chastisements.[b] (9) **old age**, this expression indicates the circumstances connected with the composition of the Ps., and inclines us to the Davidic authorship.

*The king's accession* (*vv.* 7—9).—Consider these words—I. In reference to David. 1. He acknowledges the mercies he had received; 2. He makes a suitable improvement of them. II. Accommodate the passage to the circumstances of this day. 1. We may at this time acknowledge the mercies of God to us; 2. We should also make a similar improvement of them.[c]

*Praying, waiting, and working.*—A working man once said,

*a* "God is a Father who bears those who trust Him in His arms, and carries them in His bosom; they are as children, who lean all their weight upon Him, and find their sweetest rest in His supporting Hand. This is the very idea of *faith*, according to its

Hebrew signification." — *Fewsmr.*

*b* So Job was regarded by his friends, Zec. iii. 8; 1 Co. iv. 9.

*v.* 6. *Dr. N. Marshall*, i. 127; *R. Warneford*, i. 213.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Peace does not dwell in outward things, but within the soul. It springs from acquiescence even in disagreeable things, not in an exemption from suffering." —*Fénélon.*

"There is no such thing in the long history of God's kingdom as an unanswered prayer. Every true desire from a child's heart finds some true answer in the heart of God. Most certain it is that the prayer of the Church of God since creation has not been the cry of orphans in an empty home, without a father to hear or answer. Jesus Christ did not pray in vain, or to an unknown God, nor has He spoken in ignorance of God or of His brethren, when He says, 'Ask and receive, that your joy may be full.'"—*Norman Macleod.*

*a Beecher.*

"More things are wrought by prayer than the world dreams of."—*Tennyson.*

"I have often been without a penny in my pocket, or a crust in my cupboard. What do I do then? I go down on my knees. I put up my prayer to God, and then I go out and look for it." He added, "There is no use in praying if you don't expect an answer to your prayer, and I've never been disappointed. But don't suppose when you have prayed you are to stand idle, and expect the answer to drop down of itself. When you have prayed you must put your own shoulder to the wheel, and then God will give you the blessing."

10–13. (10) against me, so as to depress and crush me: what they say is indicated in *v.* 11. counsel together, Ps. lxxxiii. 3–5. (11) God hath forsaken, this was the uttermost of bitterness to the pious, trusting soul. (12) O God, *etc.*, see Ps. xxii. 11, 19. (13) let, *etc.*, see Ps. xxv. 4, 26, xl. 14, lxx. 2.

*The uplifted hands.*—I. The gesture of earnest prayer, Exod. xvii. 11. 1. Aaron praying for Israel, Lev. ix. 22; 2. David, Ps. xxviii. 2, lxiii. 4; 3. Paul's injunction, 1 Tim. ii. 8; 4. Jesus' hands were uplifted on the cross, His hour of great intercession for us; 5. Jesus' hands outspread at the ascension, Luke xxiv. 50. II. The leader's hands must be upheld. 1. The teacher by his class, the superintendent by his teachers, the pastor by his flock; 2. How steadied—by prayer, by sympathy, by interest in his work, by punctuality, by holy living. III. We may use outside helps. 1. Aaron and Hur, Exod. xvii. 12; 2. Scholarship, art, culture, eloquence, social ties, Luke xxii. 36. IV. Power of prayer, James v. 16. 1. Moses made Israel prevail, Exod. xvii. 11; 2. Persistent and unfainting prayer, Exod. xvii. 12; Luke xviii. 1; 3. Ubiquitous prayer, 1 Tim. ii. 8; 4. United prayer, Acts ii. 1; Matt. xiii. 19. V. "Trust in God and keep your powder dry." 1. Prayer and works, James ii. 17—24; 2. Moses and Joshua, the rod and the sword, the praying saints on the hills and the fighting saints on the plains; 3. Our Prophet, Priest, King, Mediator, is on the heavenly hill interceding for us, Heb. iv. 14—16, vii. 25, 26, viii. 1. Let us also endure hardness (2 Tim. ii. 3), and work out our salvation (Phil. ii. 12).

*Prayer to the unseen God.*—I can stand in the rooms of my office in New York, and communicate with the men in the fifth story. If I want to speak to the foreman of the printing-office, I go and blow the whistle, and talk through the tube. And I know that the message has got up there, and that he heard it. I do not see him, and he does not answer me back; but I have no doubt that, having received the message, he will attend to my wants. I say, for instance, "Send me down the proof of such and such an article," and by-and-by he sends it down to me. So it seems to me that sometimes we speak to God in heaven, as it were, through an invisible medium. He does not answer immediately; but, nevertheless, we know that He is there, and that even if we do not conceive of Him, He conceives of us; and we send our thought or prayer up, and let it alone, and do not fret or worry about it.[a]

14–16. (14) more and more, to keep on praising while help is delayed is indeed the triumph of faith. (15) righteousness, right doings, wh. are therefore *merciful* doings. know . . numbers, Ps. cxxxix. 17, 18. (16) go, *etc.*, rend. "I will

*a* "I will come with the mighty deeds of the Lord Jahve, I will praise Thy right-

come (out of my sick chamber), making the mighty acts of Jehovah the subject of praise."[a]

*Setting out well* (*v.* 16).—In every course of conduct all depends on the sentiments and principles with which we start. Examples:—Young man leaving home, new convert making his profession, beginning of year, any momentous undertaking. I. The devout resolve. 1. The reasonableness of such confidence; 2. The need of Divine strength; 3. Its universal adaptation to human need; 4. The effect of this confidence. II. The delightful song. 1. Glory in the righteousness of God; 2. In the rectitude of His administration: the singer is justified before God in the imputed righteousness of Christ.

*Importance of beginning.*—Four men had occasion to go from Leeds to attend the winter assizes at York, respecting some trials in which they were nearly interested. Of those four, one overslept himself, lost his train, and did not get into court till after his case was disposed of. The second got into what he supposed (from want of inquiry) was the York train, and was some way on the road to London before he found out his mistake. The third reached York in time, but found he had carelessly left behind him papers which were as essential as his personal presence. The fourth was both diligent and careful, and assisted to win the cause he went to support. The first three began wrong, and all their efforts to retrieve themselves were vain. So, in spiritual things, let us be careful to "seek the Lord early," and "not to sleep, as do others." Let us "ponder the path of our feet;" and let us take care that we do not start on our pilgrimage and, like Christian, leave our "roll of promise behind us." Life is like a multiplication sum, in which a small error in the amount of the first multiplicand assumes vast dimensions in the total. The beginning enfolds the end, as the acorn enfolds the oak.

17—21. (17) hitherto, faithfully up to the present. declared, *etc.*, Ps. xl. 10. (18) when, *etc.*, Heb. *unto old age*, etc., on the very borders of it. strength, or *arm.*[a] (19) like unto thee, Ps. lxxxix. 6, 8. (20) depths of the earth, a fig. expression for overwhelming affliction. (21) comfort me, by restoring health and mercies, as to Job.

*The Christian's old age* (*v.* 18).—I. If this be true, the aged Christian must be happy in the contemplation of his past conduct and influence. II. He is happy in the contemplation of the blessings which have marked his history. III. He is happy in the contemplation of his life's history, because of the lessons which it has served to teach. IV. The aged disciple is happy in the continued possession of his life's chief good. V. The aged disciple is happy in the near prospect of realising his life's brightest hopes.[b]

*Old age.*—Ossian, in his heathenish darkness, looked upon old age as dark and unlovely. Through the light of revelation I behold in it beauty and glory. It is beautiful in its constancy, beautiful in its complacency, beautiful in its contentment. Beautiful, too, in its childlikeness—feeding by the shepherd's tents with the little lambs of the flock. Old age is beautiful in its wise counsels, and in its patient endurance of the thoughtless scorn and neglect of the inexperienced, and in its persevering buoyancy, in spite of frailty. And it is beautiful in its white

cousness, Thee alone."—*Delitzsch.*

"The verb used never means *to go forth*, but always *to go in*, or simply *to come*."—*Perowne.*

*v.* 14. *Dr. G. Lawson*, 296.

*vv.* 14, 15. *Bp. Wordsworth*, 175.

*vv.* 15, 16. *W. T. Young*, i. 203; *H. Alford*, ii. 60.

"It is good before you address yourself to the duty of prayer to read a portion of Holy Scripture, which will be of great use to furnish you both with matter and words for prayer, especially David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles. The Holy Spirit hath provided for us a treasury or storehouse of what is suitable for all occasions."—*Philip Henry.*

*a* Is. lii. 10, liii. 1; Eze. iv. 7.

*vv.* 17, 18. *Dr. S. Eaton*, 210.

*vv.* 17—19. *Bp. Hare*, i. 27.

*b Jesse Guernsey.*

"Thank God most High for all His unmerited mercies and loving kindness to me, to this day, now closing my seventy-seventh year. Through waves, and clouds, and storms, He has gently cleared my way. Praise to Him that sitteth on the throne, and maketh all things new. Amen, and Amen. O eternity! blissful eternity! Sin, earth, and hell

I now defy; I lean upon my Saviour's breast! God be thanked! Amen. The end shall soon come; joyful news!"—*Gideon Ouseley.*
*c S. A. McC.*

locks, waving above the river of death. The aged Christian almost grasps his crown which is held awaiting him, and the brightness of it is already lighting up his earthly brow. His citizenship is more in heaven than upon earth. Full of years and of experience, he is like perfected fruit. He is as a shock of corn fully ripe. There is a golden glory about pious old age. It is altogether beautiful.[c]

22—24. (22) **psaltery,** lit. *with an instrument of a lute.* **holy . . Israel,** a name for God only used in the Psalms twice.[a] (23) **my lips,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. xxxv. 28. (24) **are confounded,** he speaks as if he felt that his prayer was already realised; *v.* 13.

*Gratitude.*—The Marshal D'Armont having taken Crodon, in Bretagne, during the League, gave orders to put every Spaniard to death who was found in the garrison. Though it was announced to be death to disobey the orders of the general, an English soldier ventured to save a Spaniard. He was arraigned for this offence before a court-martial, when he confessed the fact, and declared himself to be ready to suffer death, provided they would still be willing to save the life of the Spaniard. The marshal being much surprised at such conduct, asked the soldier how he came to be so much interested in the preservation of the life of the Spaniard. "Because, sir," replied he, "in a similar situation he once saved my life." The marshal, greatly pleased with the soldier, granted him pardon, saved the Spaniard's life, and highly commended them both. Oh, that Christians never forgot Him who, while they were yet enemies, died for them, then would they neither at any time deny His name, nor decline sustaining loss in His cause.[b]

"If we are instant in prayer, every little circumstance awakens the disposition to pray, and desires and words are always ready." — *Felix Neff.*

*b Gray.*

author,—prob. Dav. in his old age

*A prayer for David's heir.*

## *PSALM THE SEVENTY-SECOND.*

1, 2. (1) **judgments,** such knowledge of Thy will, and such a spirit of judgment, that he may worthily take the place of chief magistrate. **righteousness,** or spirit of rightness, to control all his actions.[a] (2) **he shall,** better, *may he do so.*[b]

*St. Patrick's prayer.*—St. Patrick's prayer was very striking, as he was going to preach at Tara, expecting persecution. "At Tara, to-day, the strength of God pilot me, the power of God preserve me; may the wisdom of God instruct me, the eye of God watch over me, the ear of God hear me, the Word of God give me sweet talk, the hand of God defend me, the way of God guide me. Christ be with me, Christ before me, Christ after me, Christ in me, Christ under me, Christ over me, Christ on my right hand, Christ on my left hand, Christ on this side, Christ on that side, Christ at my back; Christ in the heart of every one to whom I speak, Christ in the mouth of every person who speaks to me, Christ in the eye of every person who looks upon me, Christ in the ear of every one who hears me at Tara to-day."

*Examples for the young.—A praying scholar.*—Elizabeth had been taught by a pious mother to pray, and to pray, too, for her teacher and her Sunday school. One Sabbath morning, a few minutes after she had left home for the school, she returned and went up-stairs, where she remained some time. On being questioned afterwards as to the reason, she said, "Oh, mother, I had

*a* Ps. lxxviii. 41, lxxix. 18. "Love is God's loaf; and this is that feeding for which we are taught to pray, 'Give us this day our daily bread.'"—*Beecher.*

*a* "A term referring to the inner mind and spirit, the wisdom and discernment which should be the reflex of the Divine mind."—*Perowne.*

*b* Is. xi 3, 4, xxxii. 1. "Ejaculations take not up any room in the soul. They give liberty of callings, so that at the same instant one may follow his proper vocation. The husbandman may dart forth an ejaculation, and not make a balk the more. The seaman never-

neglected one thing in my prayers this morning." "What was that, my child?" said the mother. "Why, on my way to school I remembered that I had not prayed for my teacher and my school, and that made me come back." Very early in life Elizabeth's heart was given to the Saviour: she subsequently became a devoted teacher.—*Infant solicitude.*—"One Sabbath afternoon, when engaged in our lessons," says a teacher, "one of the little ones left the class, and ran about the room, when another of them looked up in my face, and said, 'Teacher, shall we pray for him?'"—*Little girl's repentance.*—A young girl on one occasion became disobedient to her mother, very stubborn, and refused to learn her lesson. She continued in this bad spirit for some time, and had to be sent to bed in disgrace. After she was alone there, she came to herself, and repented of her wickedness. She was grieved at behaving ill to her mother, who loved her, and earnestly entreated God, for His Son's sake, to turn her heart and make her a good child. She went immediately to her mother, with tears in her eyes, begged her pardon, told her that the Lord had heard her prayer, and showed her sincerity by obeying her mother's commands.

theless steers his ship right in the darkest night. Yea, the soldier at the same time may shoot out his prayer to God, and aim his pistol at his enemy, the one better hitting the mark for the other."—*Dr. T. Fuller.* See *Dr. J. Abbadie*, iii. 1; *Dr. S. Chandler*, ii. 440; *J. Reeve*, i. 199.

3—5. (3) **mountains**, the characteristic feature of a country like Palestine.[a] Mountains and hills are used to represent the whole country. **by righteousness**, by means of; through the righteousness of the rulers.[b] (4) **judge**, vindicate the cause. **children . . needy**, those born to poverty.[c] Job xxix. 12—17. (5) **they shall**, better, *so that they*. **fear thee**, *i.e.* God. **sun and moon**,[d] the types of durability, "figs. of eternity as compared with the fleeting generations of men."

*Note on v.* 5.—At the time appointed for the commencement of the new year, which, among the Singalese, is always in April, the king sat on his throne in state, surrounded by his chiefs, and the event was announced to the people by the discharge of jingalls. At the hour appointed for the second ceremony, young women of certain families, with lighted tapers in their hands, and a silver dish containing undressed rice, and turmeric water, stood at a little distance from the king, and when he directed his face to the south-east, with imbal leaves under his feet, and nuga leaves in his hand, and applied the medicinal juice to his head and body, they thrice exclaimed, Increase of age to our sovereign of five thousand years! increase of age as long as the sun and moon last! increase of age as long as heaven and earth exist! By the chiefs and people of consequence, this part of the ceremony was performed in a manner as nearly similar as possible.[e]

*a* Joel iii. 18.

*b* Is. xxxii. 17.

*c* "Those who are born to poverty are more or less regarded, by an unrighteous government, as having no rights."—*Delitzsch.*

*d* Lit. *with the sun*, coeval with its existence, and *before*, or *in presence of* the moon while it lasts."—*Fausset.*

*v.* 4. *I. Hunt*, 81; *M. A. Mellan*, iii. 1.

*e Davy, Account of Ceylon.*

6, 7. (6) **mown grass**,[a] fields recently mown, and looking bare and brown. (7) **so . . endureth**, lit. *till there be no moon.*[b]

*The reign of Christ* (*vv.* 6—11).—I. The nature of Christ's reign. 1. It is gentle in its influence; 2. It is progressive in its development; 3. It is mighty in its results. II. The extent of Christ's reign. 1. It shall include the most distant regions; 2. The rudest tribes; 3. The most exalted individuals.[c]—*The government of Christ.*—I. The nature of the government of Christ. 1. Gently operative; 2. Richly productive. II. The extent of His dominion. 1. The most distant places; 2. The

*a* "The mown meadow is particularly mentioned, bec. the roots of the grass would be most exposed to the summer heat, after the crop had been gathered in, and the effect would be most striking in the shooting

of the young green blade after the shower."—*Perowne.*

Comp. for the fig. De. xxxii. 2; Job xxix. 22, 23; Pr. xvi. 15; 2 Sa. xxiii. 4.

*b* Job xiv. 12.

*vv.* 6, 7. *A. Farindon,* Iii. 419; *R. Synge,* 143.

*c G. Brooks.*

*d C. Simeon, M.A.*

*e C. H. Spurgeon.*

most exalted personages. Infer—(1) The folly of refusing submission to Him; 2. The blessedness of being His faithful subjects.[d]

*Christ lifted up on the cross.*—Look yonder at Christ on the cross! He set rolling that day, as it were, a snow-flake of truth as He died upon the cross; and you know what the snow-flake does upon the high Alps; a bird's wing, perhaps, sets it rolling, and it gathers another, and another, and another, till, as it descends, it becomes a mass of snow; and, by-and-by, as it leaps from crag to crag, it grows greater, and greater, and greater, until ponderous masses of ice and snow cohere together, and at the last, with an awful thundering crash, the avalanche rolls down, fills the valley, and sweeps all before it. Even so this everlasting Father on the cross set in motion a mighty force which has gone on swelling and increasing, gathering to be a ponderous mass of a mighty teaching, and the day shall come when, like an irresistible avalanche, it shall fall upon the palaces of the Vatican and upon the towers of Rome, when the mosques of Mahomet and the temples of the gods shall be crushed beneath its stupendous weight, and the everlasting Father shall have done the deed.[e]

8—11. (8) **dominion,** *etc.,* Ex. xxiii. 31. **the river,** *i.e.* the Euphrates.[a] "The sovereignty of Solomon over tributary peoples extended to the Euphrates." (9) **in the wilderness,** desert districts S. and E. of Sol.'s kingdom. **lick the dust,** the bowed attitude of profound submission is indicated. (10) **Tarshish,** farthest point commerce reached, probably in the Mediterranean.[b] "The El Dorado of the Hebrews." **presents,** in acknowledgment of benefits received. **Sheba,** the great South Arabian kingdom. **Seba,** or Saba, Josephus identifies with the island of Meroë.[c] (11) **all kings,** hyperbolical expression. *All,* in the sense of very many.

*Eastern prostrations* (*v.* 9).—In Mr. Hugh Boyd's account of his embassy to the king of Candy, in Ceylon, there is a paragraph which signally illustrates this part of the Psalm. and shows the adulation and obsequious reverence with which an Eastern monarch is approached. Describing his introduction to the king, he says, "The removal of the curtain was the signal of our obeisances. Mine, by stipulation, was to be only kneeling. My companions immediately began the performance of theirs, which were in the most perfect degree of Eastern humiliation. They almost literally licked the dust; prostrating themselves with their faces almost close to the stone floor, and throwing out their arms and legs; then rising on their knees, they repeated in a very loud voice a certain form of words of the most extravagant meaning that can be conceived: that the head of the king of kings might reach beyond the sun; that he might live a thousand years," etc. "When the king changed his place of residence, or travelled, the elders of his tribe assembled, and carried before him a sceptre, and a lance with a kind of flag upon it, to give notice of the king's approach to all who might be travelling on the road, that they might pay him the customary homage, which was by prostrating themselves before him on the ground, wiping off the dust from his feet with the corners of their garments, and kissing them."[d]

*The force of prayer.*—Prayer does not directly take away a trial

*a* "The Psalmist is here describing the universal monarchy of Christ."—*S. Cyril.*

*b* "Tartessus, a colony of the Phœnicians, in the S. of Spain. It traded with Tyre in silver, iron, tin, and lead."—*Perowne.*

*c* "It may be safely concluded that Seba denotes the African tribe inhabiting this very fertile district."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

Is. lx. 6, 9.

*v.* 8. *Dr. G. Hicks,* 347; *J. Armstrong,* 89.

*vv.* 8—11. *J. Richards,* 300.

*d Glasse, Canary Isles.*

On the first of May, in the olden times, according to annual custom, many inhabitants of London went into the fields to bathe their faces with the early dew upon the grass, under the idea

or its pain, any more than a sense of duty directly takes away the danger of infection, but it preserves the strength of the whole spiritual fibre, so that the trial does not pass into the temptation to sin. A sorrow comes upon you. Omit prayer, and you fall out of God's testing into the devil's temptation; you get angry, hard of heart, reckless. But meet the dreadful hour with prayer, cast your care on God, claim Him as your Father though He seem cruel—and the degrading, paralysing, embittering effects of pain and sorrow pass away, a stream of sanctifying and softening thought pours into the soul, and that which might have wrought your fall but works in you the peaceable fruits of righteousness. You pass from bitterness into the courage of endurance, and from endurance into battle, and from battle into victory, till at last the trial dignifies and blesses your life. The force of prayer is not altogether effective at once. Its action is cumulative. At first there seems no answer to your exceeding bitter cry. But there has been an answer. God has heard. A little grain of strength, not enough to be conscious of, has been given in one way or another. A friend has come in and grasped your hand—you have heard the lark sprinkle his notes like raindrops on the earth—a text has stolen into your mind, you know not how. Next morning you awake with the old aching at the heart, but the grain of strength has kept you alive—and so it goes on; hour by hour, day by day, prayer brings its tiny sparks of light till they orb into a star; its grains of strength till they grow into an anchor of the soul, sure and steadfast. The answer to prayer is slow; the force of prayer is cumulative. Not till life is over is the whole answer given, the whole strength it has brought understood.[e]

12–15. (12) shall deliver,[a] better. he delivereth, this is the spirit of his rule. "He merits such submission by the exercise of every royal virtue." no helper, such as the friendless orphan. (13) poor, or weak. (14) from deceit, the schemes of deceitful enemies. precious . . sight, so he will act as a righteous avenger. The Heb. word trans. *precious* means, *a matter of weight*. (15) he shall, better regarded as the expression of desire and prayer, *may he live*, etc.[b]

*Christ's government of His Church* (*vv.* 12—15).—I. The interest Christ takes in His people. 1. The description here given of His people deserves especial notice—poor, needy. friendless; 2. Jesus will suit His ministration to their necessities. II. The interest which His people take in Him. 1. They pay Him their tribute; 2. They offer prayer in His behalf; 3. They tender to Him their devoutest acknowledgments. Consider—(1) The folly of casting off His yoke; (2) The happiness of His faithful subjects.[c]

*Praise to Christ* (*v.* 15).—See yon starry host! see the mighty cohorts of cherubs and seraphs! Let men begone, and they shall praise Him; let the troops of the glorified cease their notes, and let no sweet melodies ever come from the lips of sainted men and women,—yet the chariots of God are twenty thousand, even many thousands of angels, who always in their motion chant His praise. There is an orchestra on high, the music of which shall never cease, even were mortals extinct, and all the human race swept from existence. Again: if angels were departed, still daily would He be praised; for are there not worlds on worlds, and suns on suns, and systems on systems, that could for ever

that it would render them beautiful. Some writers call the custom superstitious; it may have been so, but this we know, that to bathe one's face every morning in the dew of heaven by prayer and communion is the sure way to obtain true beauty of life and character.

"The Lord's Prayer, for a succession of solemn thoughts, for fixing the attention upon a few great points, for suitableness to every condition, for sufficiency, for conciseness without obscurity, for the weight and real importance of its petition, is without an equal or a rival."—*Paley.*

*e Stopford Brooke.*

*a* "The connection of thought is observable. The extension of the King's dominion is the result not of military force, but of moral influence: all nations will be won by the righteousness of His sway, more esp. by His care for the poor and afflicted."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Some think the reference is to the man whom the King saves; he will bring presents in recognition of the King's kindness, and he will pray for the King's prosperity.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*, *vv.* 12, 13. *T. Pierce*, 168.
A poor man once went to a pious minister, and

said, "Mr. Carter, what will become of me? I work hard, and fare hard, and yet I cannot thrive." Mr. Carter answered, "Still you want one thing; I will tell you what you shall do. Work hard, and fare hard, and *pray* hard; and I will warrant you shall thrive."

sing His praise? Yes! The ocean—that house of storms—would howl out His glories; the winds would swell the notes of His praise with their ceaseless gales; the thunders would roll like drums in the march of the God of armies; the illimitable void of ether would become vocal with song; and space itself would burst forth into one universal chorus, "Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah! still the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." And if these were gone, if creatures ceased to exist, He who ever liveth and reigneth, in whom all the fulness of the Godhead bodily dwells, would still be praised, praised in Himself, and glorious in Himself; for the Father would praise the Son, and the Spirit would praise Him: and mutually blessing one another and rendering each other beatified, still "daily would He be praised."

16, 17. (16) handful, should be *abundance.* top of the mountains, the least fruitful parts of the land. Rich harvests even crowding up to the mountain tops.[a] fruit thereof, ripened corn ears. shake, the word used denotes movement and sound. Lebanon, covered with mighty forest trees.[b] (17) his name shall, or may his name endure. continued, or renewed, by his having a long posterity. blessed in him, or bless themselves in him: cite his case as an example of blessedness.

*The greatness of the Redeemer's life* (*vv.* 16, 17).—Applying these words to Christ, we observe—I. That the greatness of His life is seen in the magnitude of its influence. 1. It is co-extensive with creation; 2. Abiding; 3. Blissful; 4. Glorious. II. The greatness of His life is developed through means. 1. Truth; 2. Wealth: 3. Prayer. III. The greatness of His life is experienced in the heavenward direction it gives to mankind—He makes men pray to and praise Him. 1. Such persons owe their existence to Christ; 2. They are the finest specimens of human excellence; 3. They alone fully give scope to their faculties to honour Him. IV. The greatness of His life is seen in the realisation through eternity of His work on earth. He shall live—1. In all that relates to men on earth—literature, institutions, etc.; 2. In the affectionate remembrance of a redeemed people; 3. As the expression of all excellence; 4. As the centre of all attraction to the glorified Church.[c]

*Growth of grass in the East* (*v.* 16).—The rapidity with which grass grows in the East is the idea here referred to. "When the ground there hath been destitute of rain nine months together, and looks all of it like the barren sand in the deserts of Arabia, where there is not one spire of green grass to be found, within a few days after those fat enriching showers begin to fall, the face of the earth there (as it were by a new resurrection) is so revived and, as it were, so renewed, as that it is presently covered all over with a pure green mantle."[d]

18—20. (18) blessed, *etc.*,[a] Ps. xli. 13. wondrous things, Job. ix. 8. (19) his glorious name, the name of His glory. (20) prayers of David, on the ground of this expression we must not assert that no Davidic compositions are found in the later books. This *v.* 20 is a compiler's note, intimating the end of Bk. II.

*The diffusion of the Divine glory* (*v.* 19).—I. The great object of desire which is here placed in view. 1. Explain "Divine

*a* "May corn cover even the mountain tops, and wave high and conspicuous as now does the Lebanon forest." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* "Like Lebanon by soft winds fann'd, rustles the golden harvest far and wide."—*Keble.*

*v.* 17. *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, iv. 194.

*vv.* 17—19. *J. E. Riddle*, 168.

*c J. H. Hill.*

"For my own part, if I had an insupportable burden—if, from any cause, I were bent upon sacrificing every earthly hope as a peace-offering towards heaven, I would make the wide world my cell, and good deeds to mankind my prayer. Many penitent men have done this, and found peace in it." — *Hawthorne.*

*d Sir T. Roe.*

*a* "This and foll. *vv.* are a later doxology, appended here to mark the close of the Second Book of the Psalter." —*Perowne.*

*v.* 18. *L. Atterbury*, 77.

glory"—the manifestation of the Divine majesty and perfections—in nature and revelation; 2. The nature of the desire—prompted by the evident ignorance of men. II. The considerations on account of which the object of desire should be anxiously and devotedly cherished. 1. The condition of those among whom this glory is not manifested; 2. The advantages arising from the diffusion of this glory. III. The encouragements we possess for believing that the great object of desire will be finally realised. 1. No limit to the Divine power; 2. The words of prophecy; 3. What has already been done towards the final result.[b]

*The power of prayer.*—No human creature can believe how powerful prayer is, and what it is able to effect; none but those who have learnt it by experience. It is a great matter where, in extreme need, one can lay hold on prayer. I know that so often as I have earnestly prayed I have been richly heard, and have obtained more than I have prayed for. Indeed, God sometimes deferred the matter; nevertheless He came. Oh! how great an upright and godly Christian's prayer is! how powerful with God! That a poor human creature should speak with God's high majesty in heaven and not be affrighted, but know, on the contrary, that God smileth friendly upon him for Christ's sake, His dearly-beloved Son![c]—*An example of prayer.*—We can see an example of our Lord Jesus Christ's habits about private prayer. We are told that "in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed." We shall find the same thing often recorded. When He was baptised we are told that He was "praying" (Luke iii. 21). When He was transfigured, we are told that "as He prayed the fashion of His face was altered" (Luke ix. 29). Before He chose the twelve apostles we are told that "He continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke vi. 12). When all men spoke well of Him, and would fain have made Him a king, we are told that "He went up into a mountain apart to pray" (Mark xiv. 24). When tempted in the garden of Gothsemane, He said, "Sit ye here, while I shall pray" (Mark xiv. 34). In short, our Lord prayed always, and did not faint. Sinless as He was, He set us an example of diligent communion with His Father. His Godhead did not render Him independent of the use of all means as a man. His very perfection was a perfection kept up through the exercise of prayer.[d]

vv. 18, 19. *Dr. C. P. Layard*, 105.

v. 19. *J. Parsons*, 460.

vv. 19, 20. *W. Jay*, vii. 289.

*b J. Parsons.*

*c Luther* (1540).

"The influence of believing prayer has a good analogy in the daguerreotype. By means of this process the features of natural objects are thrown upon a sensitive sheet through a lens, and leave their impressions upon that sheet. So, when the character of God is, by means of prayer, brought to bear upon the mind of the believer—that mind being rendered sensitive by the Holy Spirit—it impresses there the Divine image. In this manner the image of Christ is formed in the soul, the existence of which the Scripture represents as inspiring the believer with the hope of glory."—*Philosophy of the Plan of Salvation.*

*d J. C. Ryle.*

## *PSALM THE SEVENTY-THIRD.*

author,—Asaph

*Subject, the perplexity of the good a, the temporal prosperity of the wicked.*

**1—4.** (1) **surely,** or *verily, truly.* He begins the Ps. by affirming the conclusion to which he has been led.[a] **clean heart,** Matt. v. 8. (2) **for me,** pronoun emphatic, contrasting himself with the Israel to wh. God is good. **gone,** turned aside fr. the right way. **slipped,** borne away by the current of popular opinion. (3) **envious,** an altogether unworthy disposition for a servant of God.[b] **foolish,** or proud. **prosperity,** merely in temporal things.[c] (4) **bands,** tight cords, or fetters, only used besides in Is. lviii. 6. **in their death,** some think this should be *up to* their death, until they come to die.[d]

*The goodness of God to Israel* (*v.* 1).—I. The description here given of the people of God. 1. They are represented by their

a Yes it is so; after all, God is good, notwithstanding all my doubts."—*Peroverne.*

*b* Job xxii. 6, xxi. 7; Ps. xxxvii. 1; Pr. xxiii. 17.

name: 2. By their character. II. The considerations by which their interest in the Divine love may be proved. 1. By His Son He saved them from hell; 2. By His Spirit He purifies them from sin; 3. By His providence He guides and guards them on earth; 4. At their death He receives them to heaven. Apply:—(1) Let Israel love and trust God; (2) Let others seek to be of Israel.

*Sliding of the feet* (*v.* 2).—"During my journey in the Himalayas, I was often reminded of these and other similar passages of Scripture. The mountain roads are very narrow. They are not often wide enough for more than two men to walk together, and we generally find it easier to follow in single file. I never saw the men who carry loads walking two abreast. There are ascents and descents so steep as to require the traveller to plant his foot firmly and carefully, in order to prevent his falling—sliding down the hill. In some places the roads lead around the side of a mountain, or along the bank of a torrent, with a precipice, either perpendicular, or nearly so, immediately on one side of it, of hundreds of feet in height. Sometimes the sharp ascent or descent is combined with the precipice on one side, and a farther complication of the difficulty is made by both a slope of road toward its outer edge, and a chalky or friable kind of stone in the pathway, affording no safe hold to the feet. In many of these places the traveller looks down a giddy slope of a hundred, a thousand, or two thousand feet, on which no foothold could be found, with the consciousness that a false step, or a breaking of the bank under his foot, would precipitate him into the ravine filled with stones. I came to a place where the bank above the road had slipped and filled the pathway, excepting about eight inches at the outer edge. As the ravine was not very deep, and therefore did not look very fearful, I rode around the heap, and my horse's hind foot broke down the remainder of the pathway. He carried me safely over, however; but I could not help quoting to myself the words of the Psalmist, 'My steps had well-nigh slipped,' etc. A great part of the wilderness in which the children of Israel journeyed is mountainous; so is the greater part of Judæa. The figures derived from this fact are very expressive. No one can feel their full meaning unless he has had some experience of mountain paths."[e]

5—9. (5) **not in trouble, lit.** *in the trouble of man they are not, and with mankind they are not plagued.*[a] **plagued,** a term specially used of God's chastisements. (6) **pride . . chain,** hath encircled their neck.[b] The neck being regarded as the seat of pride. **garment,** long, luxurious robes.[c] (7) **with fatness,** full feeding makes the eye project, by swelling the cushion of fat behind it. Others read it, *from a sleek countenance.*[d] **they . . will,** "the imaginations of their hearts leap over all bounds."[e] (8) **corrupt,** lit. *they deride,* or speak maliciously and blasphemously. (9) **against the heavens,**[f] in boasting and blasphemy. **through the earth,** all wh they presume to order at their will.

*Pride* (*v.* 6).—A young minister, addressing a rather fashionable audience, attacked their pride and extravagance, as seen in their dresses, ribands, ruffles, chains, and jewels. In the afternoon, an old minister preached powerfully on the corruption of human nature, the enmity of the soul towards God, and the necessity for

*e* "The great trial was to see the boastfulness of the wicked apparently justified by their security and success."—*Spk. Com.*

*d* "They have (suffer) no pangs, vigorous and well nourished is their belly."—*Delitzsch.* "For they are in no peril of death, but are lusty and strong."—*Luther.*

*v.* 1. *W. Dorman,* 183.

"In the Kensington Museum there is a picture of Dr. Johnson waiting outside in the anteroom of nobility or royalty to take his turn for an audience. The Lord our God, the King of kings, will give us an audience at any moment of the day, and, meeting with us, will bless us there."—*Rev. W. M. Statham.*

*e J. Warren,* Missy. in Hindostan.

*a* "These men seem exempt not only fr. the frailties and infirmities of men, but even fr. the common lot of men."—*Perowne.*

*b* The original is far more striking but quite untranslatable. Pride, so to speak, necks them, covers their neck, gives it stiffness, clings to it as a chain of massive gold."—*Spk. Com.* Pr. i. 9, iii. 22.

*c* Ps. cix. 18.

*d* Job xv. 27; Ps. xvii. 10.

a new heart. In the evening, as they sat together in private, the young minister said, "Father D., why do you not preach against the vanity and pride of the people for dressing so extravagantly?" "Ah, son Timothy," replied the venerable man, "while you are trimming off the top and branches of the tree, I am endeavouring to cut it up by the roots, and then the whole top must die!"[e]

10—12. (10) his people, *i.e.* God's people; the general crowd turn to follow the example of these proud and successful men. return hither, or turn hither, "run after these people and imbibe their principles without hesitation."[a] waters, *etc.*, or fulness of water is drained by them, *i.e.* broad and deep are the sinful pleasures they drink.[b] (11) they say, these tempted ones, who are led away by the prosperity of the wicked. (12) behold . . world, this is the fact that appears; it seems to pay better to be wicked.[c]

*Contentment.*—"You sometimes think your case hard," says a writer in the *New York Christian Advocate*, "but if you want to make yourself contented with your lot and station; if you wish your soul to overflow with gratitude to God for your unspeakable privileges and blessings; if you would shout aloud unto God for redeeming love, for Christianity, for the enjoyment of its blessings, even in the lowest, most degraded station on earth, then read the history of Lord Byron, then look into the miseries of those in high life, who know nothing of this sovereign balm. You will then no longer say with David, that you had 'washed your hands in innocency in vain.' 'When you go into the sanctuary, you will see their end.' Yes, you will see that it is all 'vanity and vexation of spirit.' You will not then 'be envious at the wicked.'"

13—17. (13) in vain, his diligent efforts after a holy life seemed unrecognised. washed, *etc.*, Ps. xxvi. 6. (14) plagued, *v.* 5. chastened, Heb. *my chastisement was.* (15) if I say, "this *v.* expresses a supposition, and intimates that he had kept his troubles to himself.[a] offend, *etc.*, or have betrayed;[b] "dealt unfaithfully with." (16) to know this, by meditation to get at the reconcilement of social anomalies with God's moral government. painful, grievous. "The brain grew wearier, and the heart heavier."[c] (17) sanctuary, as place of devout meditation and prayer, where God's presence and illumination are vouchsafed.[d] "The calmness of the sacred courts."[e]

*A right act, but a wrong opinion* (*v.* 13).—I. Here is a right act. Implying—1. The consciousness of personal defilement; 2. The possession of a cleansing element; 3. The effort of personal application. II. Here is a wrong opinion. Three facts show that it was a mistake to think the act in vain. 1. Moral holiness involves its own reward; 2. It is promoted by temporal adversity; 3. It will meet with its perfect recompense hereafter.[f]

*Taking thought* (*v.* 16).—This "take no thought" is certainly an inadequate translation, in our present English, of the Greek original. The words seem to exclude and to condemn that just forward-looking care which belongs to man, and differences him from the beasts, which live only in the present; and most English critics have lamented the inadvertence of our Authorised Version, which, in bidding us "take no thought" for the necessaries of life, prescribe to us what is impracticable in itself, and



*e Wordsworth.*

*f* "In the heavens." — *Revised Eng. Bib.*

*vv.* 3—7. *J. Tidcombe*, 137.

*g R. T. S.*

*a* "Therefore fall the people unto them, and thereout suck they no small advantage."— *Pr. Bk. Version.*

*b* "And they (even God's people) will drink waters of surfeiting for themselves fr. the overflowing cup of our prosperity." — *Wordsworth.*

Ps. lxxv. 8; Is. li. 17; Eze. xxiii. 34.

*Hengstenberg* and *Hupfeld* suppose the reflections of the Psalmist to begin at *v.* 12.

*vv.* 11—13. *G. Marriott*, 27.

*v.* 12. *J. Garnons*, ii. 31.

*c Whitecross.*

*a Fausset.*

*b* "Been guilty of treason to Thee, and to Thy people, if I had said that it is vain to serve God, because the wicked often prosper, and the righteous often suffer in this world."— *Wordsworth.*

"The Heb. Psalmist, instead of telling his painful misgivings, harboured them in God's presence till he found the solution. The delicacy exhibited in forbearing unnecessarily to shake the faith of others is a measure of the disinterestedness of the doubter." —*Farrar.*

*c Perowne.*

*d* "It is a thought perfectly in harmony with the context and with experience, that a light arose upon him when he withdrew fr. the bustle of the world into the quiet of God's dwelling-place, and there devoutly gave his mind to the matter."—*Delitzsch.*
*e Kay.*
*f Dr. Thomas.*
*g Trench.*
*a* "This *v.* almost points to some recent instance of Divine judgment."—*Ewald.* "That which dispels the Psalmist's doubts and restores his faith is the end of the ungodly in this world—their sudden reverses, their terrible overthrow in the very bosom of their prosperity."—*Perowne.*
*b* "The word 'was grieved' is very forcible, was in a state of ferment, of diseased excitement and disturbance: 'was pricked,' pierced as with the sharp fang of an adder."—*Spk. Com.*
*v.* 20. *J. Wesley,* vii. 318.
*c W. Forsyth, M.A.*
"The field wherein bees feed is no whit the barer for their biting; when they have taken their full repast on flowers and grass, the ox may feed, the sheep fat, on their reversions. The reason is, because those little chemists distil only the refined part of the flower, leaving the grosser substance thereof. So ejaculations bind not men to any bodily would be a breach of Christian duty, even were it possible. But there is no "inadvertence" here. When our translation was made, "take no thought" was a perfect correct rendering of the original. "Thought" was then constantly used as an equivalent to anxiety or solicitous care, as let us witness this passage from Bacon: "Harris, an alderman in London, was put to trouble, and died with thought and anxiety before his business came to an end." Or, still better, this from one of the *Somers' Tracts* (its date is that of the reign of Queen Elizabeth): "In five hundred years only two queens have died in childbirth; Queen Catherine Parr died rather of thought." A better example than either of these is that occurring in Shakespeare's *Julius Cæsar* ("Take thought and die for Cæsar"), where "to take thought" is to take a matter so seriously that death ensues.*g*

18—21. (18) slippery places, however good to look at, utterly insecure. destruction, utter and irremediable ruin. (19) moment, the suddenness of their judgment esp. striking the Psalmist's attention.*a* (20) as a dream, which seems real till we awake. thou awakest, to take notice of the doings of the wicked. image, or outward show. God takes notice of the heart condition. (21) thus, or for, explaining the whole of the prev. struggle. was grieved, embittered itself.*b*

*Slippery places* (*v.* 18).—I. There are slippery places in life. As—1. Scenes of animal excitement; 2. Opportunities of selfish gratification; 3. Company of the ungodly; 4. Times when tempted to doubt God's love and mercy. II. Those who walk in slippery places are in danger of falls. 1. Insecurity; 2. Risk of injury; 3. To peace, character, usefulness. III. Slippery places prove fatal to the wicked. 1. Unmask the evil of their character; 2. Reveal the worthlessness of their hopes; 3. Manifest that they are the objects of God's displeasure. IV. Some counsels as to slippery places. 1. Avoid them when possible; 2. When you do come to them walk warily; 3. Take such friendly help as may be available; 4. Should you fall try to get good from the evil; 5. Should you escape be thankful and give God the glory; 6. Let heaven come into your mind,—no slippery places there.*c*

*Note on Ps. lxxiii.*—Psalm seventy-third is Asaph's *miserere*, his confession to all the world of a spiritual decline, and the sad obscuration of faith under which for a time he suffered. Along some line of mistaken reasoning and feeling he had worked himself into a dangerous position—had come to fret on account of inequalities in the Divine distribution of worldly favours. Thus he permits himself to drift into a quarrel with Providence, and lacked but little of losing all evidence that he was a child of God. "My feet were almost gone." He had travelled among rocks and mountain defiles. Any such perilous way may well make one think of verse second. God designs that the mysteries of His providence should be a discipline to faith. He would teach us that danger attends the possession of worldly wealth, luxuries, and comforts; that the abuse of these good things is an unspeakably greater evil than the absence of them. At verses 23—26 the Psalm culminates. Here the man of God, who has been down among the mists and mire of a marshy region, regains an elevated plateau, and regales himself in its clear, pure, bracing atmosphere. The remainder of this Psalm runs on in the calm, full flow of chastened yet exulting song. Matchless forbearance

of God! "Those are the things," said John Owen, of the British and Foreign Bible Society, to his attached co-secretary, Mr. Hughes, who was then laying hold of his dry, cold hand, and comforting him with this passage, "Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory;" "Those are the things——" said he, but death prevented his finishing the sentence.

22–25. (22) foolish, stupid, brutish.[a] beast, a plural word used in an emphatic sense.[b] before thee, with thee, in relation to thee. (23) nevertheless, *etc.*, passing doubts had not severed him fr. God's gracious hold.[c] thou hast holden, while his feet were slipping, he had thus been kept fr. falling. (24) shalt guide, the past and present pledge the future.[d] glory, this expression must have reference to the after life.[e] (25) beside thee, to be applied, according to Heb. form, to both clauses of the verse.

*The Christian conducted to glory* (*v.* 24).—I. A good man's confidence for this life. He follows—1. The leadings of Providence; 2. The directions of the Bible; 3. The teachings of the Spirit. II. A good man's confidence for eternity. He is received to a glory of—1. Condition; 2. Character; 3. Solid glory; 4. Permanent glory.[f]

*Need of Divine guidance* (*v.* 24).—A few years ago a most painful sensation was created in the public mind by the intelligence of a distressing and fatal accident which had happened to a distinguished archdeacon of the Established Church. This gentleman, eminent alike for his character and his writings, was spending a short time on the Continent, and having with some friends ascended a mountain, expressed a strong wish to return alone by a new route. His companions remonstrated, pointed out the danger of attempting to follow an unknown path, and urged that at least their friend would accept the services of a guide. Unhappily, he would not be persuaded, and presently commenced his perilous descent. The rest of the party reluctantly pursued their course, and waited his arrival at the inn. As time passed on, and the archdeacon did not appear, their fears were reawakened, and search was ordered to be made. Soon they were horrified, yet not surprised, to hear that the lifeless body of their friend had been found beneath a precipice, over which he had fallen in his attempt to reach the inn. How striking an illustration does this sad incident afford of the fatal obstinacy of those who persist in relying on their own wisdom and strength of purpose in the journey of life! What can await them but destruction if they refuse to accept guidance? Yet a guide is not enough at all times. Only recently, a party of travellers on Mont Blanc, accompanied by skilful guides, were overtaken by an avalanche; and not only two of their number, but one of the guides also, perished in a moment. We need an unerring guide; and where shall it be found but in Him who is infinite Wisdom as well as infinite Love?

26–28. (26) faileth, or may have failed, in this time of struggle. strength, *Heb.* rock: the usual fig. for strength. for ever, plainly meaning in, and beyond, this present life. (27) a whoring, the Scrip. fig. for apostasy fr. God.[a] (Hos. ii.) (28) draw .. God,[b] Ja. iv. 8.

observance, only busy the spiritual half, which maketh them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment."—*Thomas Fuller.*

*a* Pr. xxx. 2, 3.

*b* "The poet surely has the water, the hippopotamus, in mind, wh. as a phmp colossus of flesh, is at once an emblem of colossal stupidity."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* 2 Ti. ii. 13. "Though all else in heaven and earth should fail, the one true everlasting Friend abides."—*Ewald.*

*d* "With confidence he commits himself to the Divine guidance, though he does not see clearly the mystery of the Divine purpose in that guidance."—*Delitzsch.*

*e* "The glory must be the manifestation of that abiding Presence, wh. even here sustains, preserves, and guides the faithful."—*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 22. *M. A. Meilan*, iii. 15.

*v.* 23. *D. Wilcox*, ii. 57; *Dr. H. Blair*, iii. 196.

*v.* 24. *E. Cooper*, v. 81; *Hon. G. T. Noel*, ii. 339; *T. Boston*, i. 1.

*f* *Delta* in 400 Sks.

*a* "Israel is the spouse of God, and idolatry is a breaking of the marriage vow."—*Peroone.*

*b* "This is my

*summum bonum*—not to question His doings, but to cleave closely to Him. 'Nearest to God is best.'"—*Wordsworth.*

v. 25. *Dr. Fealley*, 537; *Bp. Beveridge*, iii. 325; *Jon. Edwards*, ii. 104; *R. W. Dibdin*, 147; *R. Montgomery*, 114; *D. Wilcox*, iii. 29; *G. W. Lewis*, ii. 36.

v. 28. *R. Sibbs*, iii. 447; *Bp. Brownrig*, i. 549; *W. Strong*, 133; *H. Binning*, ii. 410; *Dr. H. Blair*, v. 160; *Dr. Dwight*, v. 34.

c *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Prayer is to religion what thinking is to philosophy. To pray is to make religion."—*Novalis.*

*Benefit of drawing near to God* (v. 28).—I. What is meant by drawing near to God? 1. With the mind; 2. With the heart. II. The benefit arising from it. 1. There is nothing so pleasant; 2. There is nothing so profitable. Address—(1) Those who never draw near to God at all; (2) Those who draw nigh to Him, but only in a formal manner; (3) Those who find their happiness in communion with God.c

*The strength of the heart* (v. 26).—Under outward ills a resolute heart may bear up; but when the foundation of courage and cheerfulness itself gives way, when the very fountain of fortitude itself runs dry, what shall be done? Who does not know what sinking of soul means? Is there anything to keep one from utter prostration—from falling irrecoverably into despondency or despair? "God is the strength of my heart," the rock of my heart. I am resting on a firm foundation. I lean upon no arm of flesh. I have not only a strong foundation, but strong consolation. In each of the four thousand hourly strokes of this heart He sustains and quickens. When this frail organ, beating fainter and fainter, ceases at length altogether, when body and soul are rent apart, shall I be confounded? No, indeed. Cecil states that John Newton, about a month before his death, said, "It is a great thing to die, and, when heart and flesh fail, to have God for the strength of our heart, and our portion for ever. I know whom I have believed, and He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that great day." "It is come!" said the Rev. J. Sutcliffe; "perhaps a few moments more. Heart and flesh fail! But God,—that God is the strength of His people, is a truth that I now see as I never saw it in my life."

## *PSALM THE SEVENTY-FOURTH.*

author,—unknown: one of the school of Asaph: date, after the Bab. destruct. of Jerus.

*Subject, wailing over the desolation of the sanctuary.*

*Maschil*, Ps. xxxii.

a Ps. lxxvii. 20, lxxviii. 52, lxxix. 13.

b "A phrase wh. in Eastern language still signifies to walk quickly, to reach out, to be in good earnest, not to hesitate."—*Kitto.*

c "Or the tokens of their idolatrous worship."—*Wordsworth.*

v. 3. *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 37.

vv. 4, 5. *J. B. Masillon*, 6.

**1–4.** (1) **for ever**, so terrible was the desolation the Psalmist fears it may be permanent. **anger . . smoke**, Ps. xviii. 8. **sheep**, *etc.*, Jer. xxiii. 1.a (2) **the congregation**, Ex. xv. 16. The people of Israel in their religious aspect. **rod**, the people in their national and political aspects, lit. *tribe.* **redeemed**, out of Eg. bondage. **Zion**, regarded as permanent habitation of God. (3) **lift . . feet**, *i.e.* come quickly.b Ge. xxix. 1. **perpetual desolations**, ruins in such a state of destruction that hope of restoration has failed. (4) **thy congregations**, thy place of meeting. **ensigns**, Chaldæan military banners.c

*Ensigns* (v. 4).—In Numb. ii. 2. foll., the different tribes have their ensign [*ōth*], and every three tribes have a standard [*degel*]. In Ps. lxxiv. 4, the enemies of God "set up their ensigns for signs" (Auth. Vers.); "set up their banners for tokens" (Prayer Book). Note, it is the same Heb. word repeated, "Set up their ensigns [as] ensigns," *i.e.* have usurped the place of God's own people. "Ensign" is often a translation of *Nēs*, a lofty pole (Numb. xxi. 8), or mountain-standard (Isa. xiii. 2, xviii. 3). In Exod. xvii. 15, Moses calls an altar which he built, "Jehovah my banner" [Jehovah *Nissi*], because, as the next verse explains, "the inscription is on the banner of Jehovah—'Jehovah makes war with Amalek for ever,'" where *Nēs* is generally read for *Kēs* (throne), which makes no sense.—*Prayer.*—An arrow, if it be

drawn up but a little way, goes not far; but if it be pulled up to the head, flies swiftly and pierces deep. Thus prayer, if it be only dribbled forth from careless lips, falls at our feet. It is the strength of ejaculation and strong desire which sends it to heaven and makes it pierce the clouds. It is not the arithmetic of our prayers, how many they are; nor the rhetoric of our prayers, how eloquent they be; nor the geometry of our prayers, how long they be; nor the music of our prayers, how sweet our voice may be; nor the logic of our prayers, how argumentative they may be; nor the method of our prayers, how orderly they may be; nor even the divinity of our prayers, how good the doctrine may be—which God cares for. He looks not for the horny knees which James is said to have had through the assiduity of prayer. We might be like Bartholomew, who is said to have had a hundred prayers for the morning, and as many for the evening, and all might be of no avail. 'Fervency of spirit' is that which availeth much.

5—9. (5) **famous**, *etc.*,[a] Jer. xlvi. 22. (6) **but now**, better, *and now*. **carved work**, 1 Ki. vi. 29. (7) **cast fire**, or "they have hurled Thy sanctuary (as if it were a mere log of wood) into the fire."[b] **defiled**, omit the words *by casting down*. Comp. Ps. lxxxix. 39. "The defilement consisted in casting the holy things into a fire made upon the holy ground." (8) **synagogues**, "God's places of assembly."[c] Synagogues are not mentioned before the Chaldæan invasion. (9) **our signs**, *v.* 4. **how long**, such desolation is to continue.

*The synagogue* (*v.* 8).—The origin of the synagogue, like that of many similar institutions, is confused and conjectural to a degree, and indeed the term itself was used in a general sense for a particular semi-religious body, and in a special one for the building in which that body held its meetings. In the first meaning, there is little doubt that even from the earliest times certain members of the great Sanhedrim separated themselves into local associations for the purposes of the education of the young, the instruction of the people, the administration of the law, and the due performance of the lesser rites of Judaism. In process of time, however, the buildings appropriated to the meetings of these assemblies assumed more directly the title of synagogues (*sunagoge*) yet while the bond of national fraternity remained unsevered, and the twelve jewels in the Aaronic breastplate really represented the national unity, the altar of all the tribes of Israel was at the temple of Solomon alone. But days of defection and consequent affliction succeeded, the impious cupidity of the Babylonian conquerors razed the proud walls of king Solomon to the ground, and expatriated his descendants from the land of their fathers. Disheartened but not desponding, the Jewish elders at once saw the difficulty of continuing the temple service among the scattered tribes, while the existence of the widely distributed places of assembly (Beth-Haccnesseth) was a ready solution of that difficulty, and hence the synagogues became subsidiary temples wherever there were sufficient Jews to establish a congregation. Thus the very expatriation of the Israelites served for the better conservation of their ritual, and thus from the demolition of one temple arose the numerous houses of God in the land.

When Melanothon was entreated by his friends to lay aside the natural anxiety and timidity of his temper, he replied, "If I had no anxieties, I should lose a powerful incentive to prayer; but when the cares of life impel to devotion, the best means of consolation, a religious mind cannot do without them. Thus trouble compels me to prayer, and prayer drives away trouble."

*a* "Each man was seen as if plying aloft hatchets in a copse of wood." —*Kay*.
"This *v.* compares the scene of ruin in the interior of the sanctuary, the destruction of the carved work, etc., to the wide gap made in some stately forest by the blows of the woodman's axe." —*Perowne*.

*b* "This certainly denotes the burning either of a part of the sanctuary or of consecrated things." —*Spk. Com*.

*c* *Revised Eng. Bible*.
Heb. *moēd*, properly *a set time, a stated season*, and so *a festival*.
*v.* 9. *Dr. F. Randolph*, 153.
Constantine the Great was one day looking at some statues of noted persons, who were represented *standing*. "I shall have mine taken *kneeling*," said he, "for that is how I have risen to eminence."

10—12. (10) **O God**, *etc.*, see *vv.* 18, 22. The Psalmist feels the dishonour put on God's name, more than the desolation afflicting the people.[a] (11) **pluck it out**, lit. *out of Thy bosom make an end.* "Put forth Thy right hand and destroy by one blow."[b] (12) **my king**, Ps. xliv. 4.[c]

*Bosom, and right hand* (*v.* 11).—The word which we translate bosom does not always, in Eastern language, mean the breast; but often the lap, or that part of the body where the long robe folds round the loins. Thus, in the folds of the garment, in front of the body, the Orientals keep their little valuables, and there, when they are perfectly at ease, they place their hands. Sternhold and Hopkins, who translated from the original text, have the same idea:

> "Why dost thou draw thy hand aback,
> And hide it in thy lap?"

To a king, whose enemies have invaded his territories, and are ravaging his kingdom, it will be said, should he not make any exertions to repel them, "Why does your majesty keep your hands in your *maddeyila* (bosom)? Take your sword, your heroism thence." When two men go to a magistrate to complain of each other, perhaps one says, "He has beaten me severely, my lord." Then the other replies, "It is true, I did strike him, but these wounds on my body show he did not keep his hands in his bosom." "Complain not to me, fellow, for want of food: do I not see you always with your hands in your bosom?" "He has been cursing me in the most fearful way, but I told him to put the imprecations in his own bosom." "Thy right hand," which is the hand of honour. Hence, "the right hand of the Most High." The Hindoos have a right-hand caste, and when they take a solemn oath they lift up that hand to heaven. The whole of the right side of a man is believed to be more honourable than the left, and all its members are said to be larger and stronger; and to give more dignity to it, they call it the *ānpackham*, *i.e.* the male side; whereas the other is called the female. This idea, also, is followed up in reference to their great deity, Siva; his right side is called male, and the other the female; which notion also applies to the Jupiter of western antiquity, as he was said to be male and also female.[d]

13—17. (13) **divide the sea**, Ex. xiv. 21. **dragons**, sea-monsters, regarded as emblems of Egypt. (14) **leviathan**, Job iii. 8, *marg.* **meat**, *etc.*, reference is to the dead bodies of the Egyptians cast on the shores of the Red Sea. (15) **cleave**, *etc.*, Ex. xvii. 6; Nu. xx. 11. **driedst**, *etc.*, Jos. iii. 13. (16) **day**, *etc.*, affirmation of God's rights as Creator as well as Redeemer. (17) **summer and winter**, Ge. i. 14.

*Summer* (*v.* 17).—I. Thou hast made summer. How? 1. By various means: 2. Gradually; 3. Perfectly. II. Thou hast made summer. How often? The constant repetition of the mercy teaches us—1. That God does not forget His promise, Gen. viii. 22; 2. His power does not grow less; 3. He bears with man's ingratitude. III. Thou hast made summer. Why? 1. He delights to communicate joy; 2. To awaken gratitude; 3. To provide sustenance; 4. To reward labour. IV. Thou hast made summer. For whom? 1. Specially for His children; 2. For the evil as well as for the good; 3. For all lands and peoples; 4. For the insect as well as

[a] Comp. Ex. xxxii. 12, 13; Nu. xiv. 13—16; De. ix. 28.

[b] "The expression denotes a state of inactivity, the hand being enveloped in the ample folds of the Eastern robe."—*Perowne.*

[c] Hab. i. 12.

"It is a fact that God's care is more evident in some instances of it than in others to the dim and often bewildered vision of humanity. Upon such instances men seize and call them providences. It is well that they can, but it would be gloriously better if they could believe that the whole matter is one grand providence."—*George MacDonald.*

[d] *Roberts.*

[a] **v. 17.** *A. Alison*, i. 429; *W. Jay*, ii. 151; *T. Blackley*, i. 269; *J. Foster*, i. 278.

"Come, gentle spring, ethereal mildness, come, and from the bosom of yon dropping cloud, while music wakes around, veil'd in a shower of shadowing roses, on our plains descend."—*Thomson.*

for man. Apply:—(1) Will He not make summer in the spiritual world? (2) Is not summer most glorious?[a]

*Leviathan* (*v.* 14).—Leviathan is a name given not only to the crocodile, but to the whale and other large fishes. The Zum, or people inhabiting the wilderness, are supposed, by many sensible writers, to be the Ichthyophagi, or fish-eaters, who occupied, according to ancient authors, a part of the coast of the Red Sea. The Psalmist is here speaking of Israel's passage through its waters, and it is a singular fact that Diodorus, who lived about two thousand years ago, mentions a tradition prevalent amongst these very persons, to the effect that in the time of their remote forefathers an extraordinary reflux took place, the channel of the gulf becoming dry, and the green bottom appearing, whilst the whole body of water rolled away in an opposite direction. There can be little doubt that this strange people would have used for food, and various purposes, such great fishes as might have been cast ashore on the termination of the miracle. Most writers give this text a figurative meaning, but that is no reason why it may not be also literally understood; for such a mode of speaking is common in the Bible. But whether we understand it one way or the other, we have the testimony of heathens to its propriety and force. If by the term "Leviathan" we believe Egypt to be intended, and by its "heads," those petty states into which that country was divided, the traditions of India and the East inform us that such designations were well understood, and therefore beautifully applicable.

18—23. (18) thy name, wh. as Creator and Redeemer is so great. (19) thy turtle dove,[a] Song Sol. ii. 14. "The meek and lonely Church." (20) covenants,[b] made with Abraham, and renewed with the fathers. (21) ashamed, by getting no deliverance. (22) reproacheth, *v.* 18. (23) increaseth continually, ascendeth; goes up to heaven crying aloud for vengeance.[c]

*God's interest in His people* (*v.* 22).—I. God has a cause on earth which He owns. 1. It is the cause of truth; 2. Of holiness; 3. Of happiness. II. The cause of God has enemies who oppose it. 1. By reasoning; 2. By ridicule; 3. By organisation; 4. By persecution. III. Prayer should be addressed to God to plead His own cause. 1. Why should prayer be offered for this purpose? 2. How may we expect this prayer to be answered?

*Cruelties of the heathen* (*v.* 20).—We are generally accustomed to associate this horrible practice with our ideas of heathenism in its most barbarous provinces; but an acquaintance with the real state of things will prove that the devotees of idolatry, however distinguished their attainments, all come under one denunciation. "The dark places of the earth are full of the habitations of cruelty." When Mr. Medhurst resided in Penang, a Chinese came to him for medicine, who said he had three sons and one daughter, adding, "I had another daughter, but I did not bring her up." "Not bring her up! what, then, did you do with her?" "I smothered her; and this year I heard by letter that another daughter was born; I sent word to have that smothered also, but the mother has preserved it alive." Mr. Medhurst, shocked at this speech, and still more at the horrid indifference with which it was uttered, exclaimed, "What! murder your own children! Do you not shudder at such an act?" "Oh, no," replied the man;

*a Stems and Twigs.*
"Wherever there is a man who feels the sting of sin, and would have release, he has a right to say, 'O Father! help me!' Wherever there is a man who is conscious that he has done wrong again, and again, and again, and that in his own strength he never can stand, and that he needs help, he has a right to ask for it: 'I am lost in sin; I have no strength to rescue myself; Thou art God; save me!'—that is an argument which knocks louder at the bosom of God than any battle-axe at the gate of any castle on earth."—*Beecher.*

*a* "Save Thy turtle-dove fr. the talons and beak of the eagle, the emblem of Babylon. Da. vii. 4."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* Ps. lxxviii. 10; Is. lxiv. 8.
*c* Ge. iv. 10. xviii. 20; Ex. iii. 7–9.
*v.* 19. *T. Boston,* ii. 130.
*v.* 20. *R. Erskine,* v. 444.
*v.* 22. *Abp. Laud,* i. 119; *J. Jones, Bampt. Lect.* 1.

Melancthon, going once upon some great service for the Church of Christ, and having many doubts and fears about the success of his business, was greatly relieved by a company of poor women and children, whom he found praying together for the prosperity of the Church.

"it is a very common thing in China; we put the female children out of the way, to save the trouble of bringing them up; some people have smothered five or six daughters!" [d]

*d R. T. S.*

author,—unknown: date as prev. Ps.

*Proclam. of God's righteous judgment.*

*Al-taschith*, Ps. lvii.

*a* Ps. ix. 16.

*b.* Is. xl. 12.

*c* "Ref. may be to the two pillars, *Jachin* and *Boaz*, in front of the temple, 1 Ki. vii. 21."—*Wordsworth.* *v.* 1. *J. Alleine*, 83. *vv.* 2, 3. *Abp. Laud*, i. 91; *Bp. Lake*, 282.

*v.* 3. *Bp. Andrewes*, ii. 1.

*d Burckhardt.*

"A man of lofty bearing is said to carry his horn very high. To him who is proudly interfering with the affairs of another it will be said, 'Why show your *kombu* (horn) here?' 'What! are you a horn for me?' 'See that fellow, what a fine horn he has; he will make the people run.' 'Truly, my lord, you have a great horn.' Chinnan has lost his money, ay, and his hornship too.' 'Alas! alas! I am like the deer, whose horns have fallen off.'"—*Roberts. a Summer Ramble in Syria.*

## *PSALM THE SEVENTY-FIFTH.*

1—3. (1) name is near, name is put for God Himself, the manifestation of God's attributes.[a] (2) when, *etc.*, this appears to be the response of God. Lit. *when I shall take a set time*, i.e. for executing My judgments. (3) dissolved, with terror of God's judgments. bear . . pillars, or *I have poised them.*[b] "The expression *pillars* may however mean *rulers.*" [c]

*Signs of God's nearness illustrated.*—"Ayd still expressed his certainty that somebody had approached us last night, so much confidence did he place in the barking of his dog; he therefore advised me to hasten my way back, as some Arabs might see our footsteps in the sand, and pursue us in quest of a booty. On departing, Ayd, who was barefooted, and whose feet had become sore with walking, took from under the date bush round which we had passed the night a pair of leathern sandals, which he knew belonged to his Heywat friend, the fisherman, and which the latter had hidden here till his return. In order to inform the owner that it was he who had taken the sandals he impressed his footstep in the sand just by, which he knew the other would immediately recognise, and he turned the toes towards the south, to indicate that he had proceeded with the sandals in that direction." [d]

4—7. (4) fools, always in Scrip. with added idea of *wicked.* horn, for the fig. *see* 1 Sam. ii. 1; and also Da. viii. 3. (5) stiff neck, the sign of pride. (6) promotion, lifting up; take in general sense of success or prosperity. (7) God, our God; He alone.

*Lifting up the horn* (*v.* 4).—Mr. Munroe, speaking of the females in a Maronite village in Mount Lebanon, observes: "But the most remarkable peculiarities of their dress are the immense silver ear-rings hanging forward upon the neck, and the *tantoura*, or 'horn,' which supports the veil. This latter ornament varies in form, material, and position, according to the dignity, taste, and circumstances of the wearer. They are of gold, silver-gilt, or silver, and sometimes of wood. The former are either plain or figured in low relief, and occasionally set with jewels; but the length and position of them is that upon which the traveller looks with the greatest interest, as illustrating and explaining a familiar expression of Scripture. The young, the rich, and the vain wear the *tantoura* of great length, standing straight up from the top of the forehead; whereas the humble, the poor, and the aged place it upon the side of the head, much shorter, and spreading at the end like a trumpet. I do not mean to say that these distinctions are universal, but I was told that they are very general, and thus the 'exalted horn' still remains a mark of power and confidence, as it was in the days of Israel's glory." [a]

8—10. (8) wine is red, lit. *it foams*[a] *with wine, full of mixture*, i.e. strong spiced wine. dregs, at bottom of the cup. (9)

*a* "Foameth as it is poured into the

declare, God's righteousness and rule. (10) cut off, and so utterly humiliate them by the destruction of their power.

*The punishment of the wicked* (*v.* 8).—The punishments which Jehovah inflicts upon the wicked are compared to a cupful of fermenting wine, mixed with intoxicating herbs, of which all those to whom it is given must drink the dregs or sediment. The same image is found, not only frequently in other places in the Old Testament, but also very often in the Arabian poets. Thus Taabbata Scharran, in a passage of an Arabic Anthology, by Alb. Schultens: "To those of the tribe of Hodail, we gave the cup of death, whose dregs were confusion, shame, and reproach." Another poet says: "A cup such as they gave us, we gave to them." When Calif Almansor had his valiant though dreaded general, Abre-Moslem, murdered, he repeated the following verse, in which he addressed the corpse: "A cup such as he gave, gave I him, bitterer to the taste than wormwood."[b]

cup fr. the wine jar."—*Perowne.*

*v.* 8. *Dr. T. Horton*, 129.

*vv.* 9, 10. *W. Gilpin*, i. 203.

Pericles, the great Athenian statesman, so renowned for the power of his intellect, never began to address an audience without first praying to the gods.

*b Burder.*

## *PSALM THE SEVENTY-SIXTH.*

author,—unknown: date as prev. Ps.

*Praise for a great deliverance.*

1—3. (1) known, by many gracious defendings and deliverings. great, highly esteemed and praised. (2) Salem, prob. poetic for Jerusalem.[a] is his tabernacle, better *was;* there it was set up by David. (3) arrows of the bow, lit. *the lightnings of the bow.*[b]

*God is our portion.*—As the scattered rays of light are all included in the focus, as the fountain contains the streams, as the object reflected is prior to and nobler than the different reflections of it—so all finite and created good is contained in Him who is the supreme good; all earthly excellence is but the partial emanation, the more or less bright reflection of the Great Original. To have a portion, therefore, in God is to possess that which includes in itself all created good. The man who is in possession of some great masterpiece in painting or sculpture need not envy others who have only casts or copies of it. The original plate or stereotype is more valuable than any impressions or engravings thrown off from it; and he who owns the former owns that which includes, is capable of producing all the latter. . . . . Surveying the wonders of creation, or even with the word of inspiration in his hand, the Christian can say, "Glorious though these things be, to me belongs that which is more glorious far. The streams are precious, but I have the Fountain; the vesture is beautiful, but the Weaver is mine; the portrait in its every lineament is lovely, but that Great Original, whose beauty it but feebly depicts, is mine, my own. 'God is my portion, the Lord is mine inheritance.' To me belongs all actual and all possible good, all created and uncreated beauty, all that eye hath seen or imagination conceived; and more than that, for eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive what God hath prepared for them that love Him. All things and beings, all that life reveals or death conceals, everything within the boundless possibilities of creating wisdom and power is mine; for God, the Creator and Fountain of all, is mine."[c]

Historical connection, prob. 2 Ki. xix. 35; Is. xxxvii.

*Neginoth*, Ps. iv.

*a* Ge. xiv. 18; He. vii. 1, 2.

*b* "Arrows being so regarded fr. their rapid flight, and their glittering in the air; or poss. with an allusion to the burning arrows employed in ancient warfare."—*Perowne.*

2 Ki. xix. 32.

*vv.* 1–3. *R. Bruce*, 279.

Man without patience is the lamp without oil; and pride in a rage is a bad counsellor.

*c Dr. Caird.*

But if we neglect prayer it is difficult for us to pray; for the water in the well gets low."—*Felix Neff.*

4—7. (4) mountains of prey, the proud empire of Assyria.[a] (5) slept their sleep, of death: as in sudden night destruct. of Sennacherib's army.[b] found their hands, a fine expression of hopeless, helpless bewilderment. (6) chariot and horse, poetically united in the sudden destruction. (7) thou, repeated to give emphasis and solemnity. God's people should learn humbling lessons from His dealings with their enemies.

*God greatly to be feared* (*v.* 7).—It is my purpose at this time—I. To establish this statement. Notice—1. What God is in Himself; 2. What He has recorded respecting His dealings with mankind; 3. What He has taught us to expect at His hands. II. To confirm this statement. 1. Here is an appeal to every child of man; 2. God is angry with the disobedient; 3. Who can resist His anger? Apply:—(1) Then let the ungodly seek reconciliation; (2) Let the godly forbear to excite His anger.[c]

*Preston's last words.*—The more you are acquainted with God while you live, the more willing you will be to die, to go to Him; for death, to a child of God, is nothing else but a resting with God, in whose bosom he hath often been, by holy meditation, when he was alive. Dr. Preston, when he was dying, used these words: "Blessed be God, though I change my place I shall not change my company; for I have walked with God while living, and now I go to rest with God."[d]

8—12. (8) judgment, the view of God as judge is peculiar to the Psalms ascribed to Asaph. from heaven, the destruction coming by wind or storm. (9) meek, as contrasted with the proud whom He destroys. (10) the wrath, such as Sennacherib's. remainder, *etc.*, man's last impotent efforts to assert his own power God takes and uses for His own purposes and glory.[a] (11) to be feared, *lit.* the *terrible one*.[b] (12) cut off, fig. for complete judgment.[c]

*The wrath of man overruled* (*v.* 10).—I. Explain the term wrath of man. What it involves—pride, resentment, revenge, etc. II. How it has been overruled. 1. Sometimes the wrath has been suddenly crushed by an avenging stroke of Divine justice; 2. Or the wrathful have been arrested with religious conviction; 3. Or it has provoked signal manifestations of Divine power; 4. Or it has revealed, as in persecution, the sustaining power of God's truth; 5. Or it has been made to produce a result different from what was intended; 6. Or it has been used to destroy other great evils.[d]

*Wrath of man overruled* (*v.* 10).—"Who would have thought," says Saurin, "that King Henry VIII., a cruel and superstitious king, the greatest enemy the Reformation ever had—he who, by the fury of his arms, and by the productions of his pen, opposed this great work, refuting those whom he could not persecute, and persecuting those whom he could not refute,—who would have thought that this monarch should first serve the work he intended to subvert, clear the way for reformation, and by shaking off the yoke of the Roman pontiff, execute the plan of Providence, while he seemed to do nothing but satiate his voluptuousness and ambition?"[e]

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*a* Na. ii. 11, 12, iii. 1.

Is. xli. 15; Eze. xxxviii. 11, 12; Zec. iv. 7.

"By the 'mountains of spoil,' *Hupfeld* understands Jerusalem as the stronghold where the spoils of the invaders are divided."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* 2 Ki. xix. 35.

*v.* 5. *Dr. J. Owen*, xvi. 281.

*v.* 7. *J. March*, 1.

*c* *C. Simeon, M.A.*

*d* *Cheever.*

*a* "The residue of wrath Thou girdest on."—*Revised Eng. Bib.*

*b* Is. viii. 13.

*c* "Like a vine-dresser, who prunes away the rank boughs, or cuts off the ripe clusters of the vine."—*Peroune.*

Jer. vii. 9, li. 33; Joel iii. 13; Re. xiv. 15.

*vv.* 8, 9. *W. Jones*, i. 337.

*vv.* 9, 10. *Bp. M. Smith*, 113.

*v.* 10. *W. Bridge*, iii. 387; *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 220; *E. Erskine*, ii. 281; *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, v. 176; *Dr. H. Blair*, ii. 396; *Dr. S. Hopkins*, 352; *J. Foster*, ii. 66; *J. Jowett*, 113.

*d* *J. Foster.*

*e* *Whitecross.*

## PSALM THE SEVENTY-SEVENTH.

author,—unknown: date the age of Habakkuk

*Subject, despondency relieved by remembering God's deliverances.*

1—4. (1) he gave ear, or may He hearken unto me. (2) my sore, Heb. *my hand*, stretched out in prayer.[a] ceased not, to be outstretched. (3) complained, or mused. (4) thou .. waking, a feature of his suffering was sleeplessness. cannot speak, in prayer, so have to pray in my heart.

*Recollections of God painful to the wicked* (*v.* 3).—I. What is meant by remembering God? 1. Not a casual and transient remembrance of Him; 2. But remembering His moral attributes and relations as one who knows, hates, and will punish sin. II. Why any of God's creatures should be troubled at the recollection of Him. 1. Nothing in His character necessarily to cause trouble; 2. It is sin. Apply:—(1) The moral character of man corresponds with his habitual views and feelings with respect to God; (2) How wretched the state of the impenitent; (3) How great our obligations to the Gospel—a Gospel of reconciliation.[b]

*An aged mariner.*—A terrible shipwreck occurred, not many years ago, on the west coast of Scotland. Those who were saved out of a large number that perished owed their lives to one wakeful man. He was no watchman of the coastguard, no pilot on the look-out for homeward-bound ships, but only an old, infirm seaman, who had gone to bed with the rest of the world. He had courted sleep that night, but, for no reason he could fancy, his eyes were kept waking. Weary of turning and tossing on a sleepless bed, he rose and walked the floor. With an old sailor's love of the sea, he drew aside the curtain of his cottage window, to gaze out on the heaving deep; and while the sight of it was waking up the memory of former years, his eye, ere a landsman could have descried it, caught an object coming shoreward through the gloom. Horror seized him. Like a reckless soul, bent on destruction, it is an ill-fated ship rushing on that iron-bound coast, and right into the jaws of death. Many were hurried that night into a watery grave; yet, but for the circumstance that sleep had fled the old man's couch,—but for the alarm he gave,—but for the boats that were launched to the rescue,—many more had been drowned, and some, perhaps, damned, who, converted to God, are now living to His glory on earth, or beyond the reach of all storms, safely housed in heaven. God held his eye waking; He had His work for that ancient mariner to do.[c]

5—9. (5) days of old, past times of prosperity. (6) song in the night, joy keeping from sleep, as suffering and grief now do. (7) will, *etc.*, this was the kind of despondent questioning with which his soul was burdened. (8) clean gone, so that there is no hope of its return. (9) forgotten, *etc.*, Is. xl. 27—31.

*Despondency depicted and reproved* (*vv.* 7—10).—I. Consider what these questions import. 1. Disquieting apprehensions in reference to himself; 2. Desponding fears in reference to God. II. Whence they proceed. 1. From impatience; 2. From unbelief. III. How they should be answered. 1. How mighty His power; 2. How rich His mercy; 3. How mysterious His ways; 4. How sure His promises. Address—(1) Those who are walking

To *Jeduthun*, or after the manner of Jeduthun.

*a* "The stretched out, weak, and powerless hand, conveys the picture of a relaxation of the whole body." — *Hengstenberg.*

*v.* 3. *J. Seed*, ii. 33; *J. Penn*, i. 53; *Dr. E. Payson*, ii. 117.

*b Dr. E. Payson.* "Wait patiently on God. It is becoming of a dutiful child, when he hath not presently what he writes for to his father to say, "My father is wiser than I; his own wisdom will tell him what and when to send to me." O Christian, thy heavenly Father hath gracious reason which holds His hands for the present, or else thou hadst heard from Him ere now."—*Gurnall.*

*c Dr. Guthrie.*

*vv.* 5, 6, *Bp. Maltby*, i. 18.

*v.* 6. *W. Gilpin*, iii. 65.

*vv.* 7, 8. *J. Wesley*, vi. 514.

*vv.* 7–10. *F. Close*, i. 249; *H. Goodwin*, ii. 66.

*vv.* 9, 10. *Bp. Sherlock*, ii. 12.

*a C. Simeon, M.A.* Colton declares that in moments

of despondency Shakespeare thought himself no poet; and Raphael doubted his right to be called a painter. We call such self-suspicions morbid, and ascribe them to a hypochondriacal fit; in what other way can we speak of those doubts as to their saintship, which occasionally afflict the most eminently holy of the Lord's people? *b J. Knox* (1554).

*a* "It is mine appointed lot and trial, that the right hand of the Most High has turned against me."—*SoLXX., Vulg., etc. v.* 10. *Dr. T. Horton*, 178; *Dr. R. Bundy*, 371; *Bp. D. Wilson*, 352; *B. Beddome*, ii. 161. *v.* 11. *Dr. Stennett*, iii. 261. "Meditation is the life of the soul; action is the soul of meditation; honour is the reward of action; so meditate, that thou mayest do; so do that thou mayest purchase honour—for which purchase give God the glory."—*Quarles.* "In meditation, those who begin heavenly thoughts and prosecute them not are like those which kindle a fire under green wood, and leave it so soon as it begins to flame."—*Bp. Hall.*

*b Roberts.*

*a* Ex. xv. 11. *v.* 13. *H. Melvill*, ii. 357.

in darkness; (2) Those who enjoy the light of God's countenance.*a*

*Divine comforts.*—How gladly, when the body is sick, would we use, and receive, and drink the medicine which would remove sickness and restore health, how unpleasant and bitter soever it was! But oh, how much more ought we with patience and thanksgiving to receive this medicine of our Father's hand, which, His Holy Spirit so working the same, removes many mortal diseases from our souls, such as pride, contempt of grace, and unthankfulness, which are the very mortal diseases that, by unbelief, slay the soul, and restores unto us lowliness, fear, invocation of God's name, remembrance of our own weakness and of God's infinite benefits, by Christ received, which are very evident signs that Jesus Christ lives in us.*b*

10—12. (10) infirmity, my sickness, affecting my mind and my heart, omit *but . . remember*. The very recollection of years when God's right hand rested in mercy upon him, increases his grief.*a* (11) remember, or make mention of. Lord, Jah, or Jehovah, the covenant God. (12) talk, as in *v.* 13.

*Meditation* (*v.* 12).—I. Motives to meditation. 1. It is the proper occupation of the mind; 2. Our character in the sight of God depends on the character of our thoughts: 3. Meditation is essential to the success of God's Word. II. Subjects for meditation. 1. God's existence and attributes; 2. His works; 3. His claims; 4. Our future. III. Aids to meditation. 1. Be impresssed with its value; 2. Remember the influence of habit; 3. Frequently review your thoughts; 4. Determine to communicate good thoughts to others. Apply:—(1) See one reason why the Gospel is not more successful—My people do not consider; (2) Beware of being in the midst of means of grace, and yet without thought; (3) Teach children to think.

*Note on v.* 10.—Dr. Boothroyd, "Then I said, This is the time of my sorrow; but the right hand of the Most High can change it." I have shown that superior honour is given to the right hand. It is that with which men fight: the "sword-arm," consequently protection, or deliverance, comes from that. David was in great distress; but he asks, "Has God forgotten to be gracious?" To this his heart replied, No! and he determined to believe in the right hand of the Most High, which had often delivered and defended him in days past, and which could again change all his circumstances. The right hand is that which dispenses gifts; no Hindoo would offer a present with his left hand. A miser is said to have two left hands! "Never, never shall I forget the right hand of that good man: he always relieved my wants." "Ah! the ungrateful wretch, how many years have I helped him! he has forgotten my right hand." "Yes, poor fellow, he has lost all his property; he cannot now use his right hand." "My children, my children," says the aged father, "how many years have I supported you! Surely you will never forget the right hand of your father."*b*

13—15. (13) in the sanctuary, or in holiness.*a* (14) declared, or displayed Thy strength, with special reference to the Exodus. (15) sons . . Joseph, Joseph mentioned here as the progenitor of Israel: and the full expression gives the recognised *fathers* of both the kingdoms, Judah and Israel.

*A happy Hindoo.*—A missionary from India relates a pleasing anecdote of a native Christian whom he was called to visit. Inquiring as to the state of her mind, she replied, "Happy! happy! I have Christ here," laying her hand on the Bengalee Bible; "and Christ here," pressing it to her heart; "and Christ there," pointing towards heaven. Happy Christian! to whatever part of the universe she might be removed, the Lord of the universe was with her, and she was secure of His favour. "Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides Thee. My heart and my flesh faileth; but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever."

**16—20.** (16) **waters**, of Red Sea. (17) **clouds**, *etc.*, reference is to the accompaniment of the passage of the Red Sea, such a storm as filled the Egyptian hosts with fear. **arrows**, fig. for lightning. (18) **in the heaven**, or in the whirlwind. (19) **thy way**, in delivering Thy people. (20) **like a flock**, Eastern flocks being *led* to their pasturage by the shepherds.

*Mystery of God's ways* (*v.* 19).—These words may be understood literally, historically, figuratively. I. The ways of God are often dark, unsearchable. 1. His decree of election; 2. Redemption; 3. Conversion; 4. Comfort; 5. Hardening sinners; 6. Providence. II. Some reasons for this. 1. For His own glory, to manifest His eternal power and Godhead; 2. To try the graces of His people; 3. To confound the wisdom of the world. Apply:—(1) Do not censure what we do not understand; (2) Live by faith; (3) Long for the day of manifestation.[a]

*Lightning* (*v.* 16).—On August 1st, 1846, St. George's Church, recently built at Leicester, was entirely destroyed by the effects of a thunderstorm! The steeple was burst asunder, and parts of it were blown thirty feet; while the vane-rod and top part of the spire fell perpendicularly down, carrying with it every floor in the tower. Mr. Highton, in comparing the power of this discharge of lightning with some known mechanical force, states that 100 tons of stone were blown a distance of 30 feet in three seconds, consequently a 12,220 horse-power engine would have been required to resist the effects of this single flash.[b]

*v.* 19. *P. Henry*, 100; *Dr B. Kennett*, 216; *S. Davis*, ii. 77.

*vv.* 19, 20. *E. Cooper*, vii. 172.

*v.* 20. *Bp. Andrews*, ii. 16.

*a P. Henry.*

"The constitution of the world, and God's natural government over it, is all mystery as much as the Christian dispensation. Yet, under the first, He has given men all things pertaining to life; and under the other, all things pertaining to godliness."—*Butler.*

A child, six years old, in a Sunday school, said, "When we kneel down in the schoolroom to pray, it seems as if my heart talked." Vain are words, if the heart prays not.

*b Timbs.*

## *PSALM THE SEVENTY-EIGHTH.*

**author and date,—unknown**

*Résumé of the national history.*

**1—4.** (1) **law**, or religious teachings. "A law of life to those who heareth." (2) **parable**, used generally of any wise, sententious utterances. **dark sayings**, wh. hide some deep truth to be studied and thought out.[a] (3) **have heard**, sayings of old, *see v.* 2.[b] (4) **not hide**, De. iv. 9, vi. 7, xi. 19.

*Children* (*vv.* 2—8).—I. The interesting objects of our solicitude mentioned. Consider—1. The love which welcomes them; 2. The evils which surround them; 3. The possibilities which await them. II. The sacred duties which we owe to them. 1. They are weak, we must protect them; 2. They are helpless, we must provide for them; 3. They are ignorant, we must instruct them—teach the praise, strength, works of the Lord; this duty is important, to be performed by parents, Christians, example, precept. III. The object which we hope shall be realised. 1. The knowledge of truth shall be perpetuated; 2. Our children

*a* Pr. i. 6.

*b* Ps. lxxvii. 5, 11.

*v.* 1. *J. Logan*, 335.

*v.* 2. *J. J. Conybeare, Bamp. Lec.* 165.

*vv.* 2, 3. *Dr. Collyer*, 73.

*vv.* 3, 4. *N. Hill*, 295.

shall put their hope in God; 3. They shall be better than their fathers.[c]

*Note on Ps. lxxiii.*—The title of this has been variously rendered as a Psalm "for" Asaph, or a Psalm "of" Asaph. Those who assert the former hold that it was probably written by David. The date was about the later part of his reign; and there is most reason to suppose it proceeded from the pen of that Asaph who is referred to in the historical books. It is designed to "give instruction;" tracing out the history of the favoured people. The author speaks of it as a parable; not in the sense, certainly, of a fictitious narration, for it contains an orderly arrangement of facts, but rather with this meaning, that the history of the Jewish nation, like Christ's parables, had hidden lessons and similitudes referring to Gospel times, of which many, or perhaps most, then living understood nothing.

5—8. (5) testimony, or revelation of Himself.[a] (6) should be born, *see* Ps. xxii. 31. (7) set . . God, as their fathers had done, or should have done. (8) stubborn, *etc.*, so the people proved during their long journeyings in the wilderness. not steadfast, but wavering in allegiance.

*Jews and Christians compared* (*v.* 8).—I. The character of that generation. 1. What might reasonably have been expected of them; 2. The reverse of this characterised their whole deportment. II. The character of ours. 1. Our favours are superior to theirs; 2. What then may be expected of us? 3. How is it with us? Address—(1) Those who are satisfied with themselves; (2) Those who are conscious of their departure from God.[b]

*A father's gift.*—"The Lord bless you, sir, in your work," said an old sailor, who had just got on board, to see his son. "My poor old father put a Bible into my chest when I first went to sea. I read but little for some time, and practised still less; but that was the book which led me to know myself as a condemned sinner, and Jesus Christ as a suitable Saviour for such a sinner; and I hope, at last, to reach in safety the port of everlasting rest. I have a boy here, and sons in other ships; and I cannot do better, I think, than follow my poor old father's example, by putting into each of my boy's chests a Bible."[c]

9—11. (9) children of Ephraim, why this tribe is singled out does not appear. We cannot fix the event here recalled.[a] The term Ephraim may be intended to stand for Israel, bec. it was in later ages the leading tribe. (10) kept, *etc.*, prob. the defection fr. the worship of God to idolatry began with this tribe. (11) his works, esp. the redemption fr. Egypt, wh. was the great witness to His claims on the nation.

*Cowardice* (*v.* 9).—I. Mention some ways in which men turn back in the day of battle. In the conflict with—1. A scoffing world; 2. With a tempting devil; 3. With sinful self. II. Show how disgraceful it is to turn back. Consider—1. Who they were—Ephraimites; 2. When they turned back—in the day of battle; 3. What were the consequences,—ark of God taken—lost their good name—the Philistines rejoiced. III. Discover the cause of their turning back. 1. They kept not God's covenant—of grace—of service; 2. They refused to walk in His law; 3. They forgot His works. IV. Suggest a preventative to turning back. 1. Be well fed with Gospel food; 2. Be well armed; 3. Keep your eye on your Captain; 4. Think often of your reward.[b]

[a] *The Study.*

"History is a sacred kind of writing, because truth is essential to it, and where truth is, there God Himself is, so far as truth is concerned."—*Cervantes.*

[a] Ps. xix. 7. .

*vv.* 5,6. *Bp. Horne*, iv. 47.

*vv.* 5–7. *S. T. Coleridge, Statesman's Manual.*

*vv.* 5, 8. *Bp. Jebb*, i. 214.

[b] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Providence conceals itself in the details of human affairs, but becomes unveiled in the generalities of history."—*Lamartine.*

[c] *Whitecross.*

[a] Unless it be Ju. ii. 10, 16, or xx. 39, 41.

[b] *The Study.*

Robert Hall, hearing that some worldly-minded persons objected to family prayer as taking up too much time, said that what might seem a loss will be more than compensated by the spirit of order and regularity which the stated observance of this duty tends to produce. It serves as an edge and border, to pre-

*The Bible reveals God.*—A Greenland convert once said to the missionaries, "Before you came amongst us we had learned something about God from His works around us; but it is only by your visiting us and making us acquainted with the Word of God that we have come to know anything about a Redeemer." This is a striking testimony to the insufficiency of the light of mere natural religion, and that it is through Divine revelation alone that man can know anything concerning the mode of his acceptance with his offended Maker.

12–16. (12) field of Zoan, Gk. *Tanis*, now *San.*[a] (13) as a heap, Ex. xiv. 22. (14) cloud, Ex. xiii. 21, xiv. 24. (15) clave, *etc.*, Ex. xvii. 6; Nu. xx. 11. (16) rock, better *cliff*.

*Christ our burden-bearer.*—Mrs. Pearsall Smith recently stated that she remembered hearing a story of a man who was going through the Western country travelling along the road. He met a man with a heavy burden on his back, and he asked him to get into his waggon to ride along, but when he got in he still kept bowed down with the heavy burden on his shoulders. "Why don't you lay down your burden?" he asked. "Oh, it is a great deal to ask you to carry me." was the reply, "and I should not like to ask you to carry my burden too." That is the way with many Christians. They have given themselves to the Lord, but are carrying their burdens, for they feel as if it would not be quite delicate or proper to ask Him to carry their burden along with themselves. A missionary in Persia came home from a long tiring walk, and sat down on the floor—as is the custom of missionaries out there—and she had no support for her back. At length a native woman crept up behind her and put her broad shoulders against her to lean on, and whispered, "Lean on me." She leaned a little bit, but felt a delicacy about leaning hard, and presently the woman whispered again, "Do you love me? If you love me, lean hard." The Lord Jesus says, "Commit your care and burden to Me, and rest on Me," and Christians honestly feel a delicacy about leaning too hard, but He is saying all the time, "If you love Me, lean on Me."

17–20. (17) provoking, by their mistrust and disobedience. (18) they tempted God, demanding, in their unbelief, signs and proofs of His power, instead of simply waiting by faith on Him. (19) furnish, or order, set out. wilderness, which yielded little or no food for man, though there might be grass for the cattle. (20) bread . . flesh, the food that seemed necessary for men.

*The evil of unbelief* (*vv.* 19–22).—I. The evil of unbelief. It often assumes the garb of humility; but its evil appears—1. From the construction which God Himself puts upon it; 2. From the indignation which He manifested on account of it. II. The disposition of mind which God approves—faith. Address—1. The querulous; 2. The doubting; 3. The true believer.[a]

*The Lord will provide.*—During the siege of the Protestant city of Rochelle, under Louis XIII. and Cardinal Richelieu, the inhabitants endured great miseries before they yielded to an honourable capitulation, the terms of which were, however, far from being kept by their enemies. One of the many touching incidents of the siege is recorded by Merivault. "He gives the names of the parties chiefly concerned," says Smedly; "and the

serve the web of life from unravelling. "The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked: but He blesseth the habitation of the just."

*a* The chief residence of the Pharaohs of the 18th and 19th dynasties on the north-western frontier.

*v.* 12. *H. Owen*, i. 231.

*vv.* 12, 16. *Dr. W. B. Collyer*, 156.

*v.* 12. "Field here, as in other places in Scripture, means an open expanse of country. In the territory of Zoan, on an easterly branch of the Nile, was the capital city of the land of Egypt at one time; the princes of Zoan are spoken of, Isa. xix. 12, 13. It is said to have been about two miles from Heliopolis."—*Gill and Clarke.*

*v.* 18. *Dr. R. Balmer*, ii. 109.

*a C. Simeon, M.A.*

"It is not the quantity of the meat but the cheerfulness of the guests which makes the feast."—*Lord Clarendon.*

"Readiness to forgive is a virtue by which God shows Himself to be exorable to His creatures, and which fixes a measure to the limits of anger, lest it should endure for ever, agreeably to the demerit of the

sins committed." —*Arminius.*

"Prayer, I consider, is like one of those high places to which men climb in order to get a wider view of all that lies below. Whenever I want to see how small my trials are, and I cannot, because, alas! they are so near, I climb up that Divine mountain and look down at them. How different they seem when seen from that distance! Some have vanished utterly. And there have been times, happy times, when, dwelling there, I as it were saw nothing else. All lay below, miles away, and forgotten." —*Kavanagh.*

narrative is marked by an air of truth which renders its authenticity undoubted. During the height of calamity among the Rochellois, some charitable individuals, who had previously formed secret magazines, relieved their starving brethren without blazoning their good deed. The relict of a merchant, named Prosni, who was left in charge of four orphan children, had liberally distributed her stores, while anything remained, among her less fortunate neighbours; and whenever she was reproached with profusion and want of foresight by a rich sister-in-law of less benevolent temper, she was in the habit of replying, 'The Lord will provide for us.' At length when her stock of food was utterly exhausted, and she was spurned with taunts from the door of her relative, she returned home destitute, broken-hearted, and prepared to die, together with her children. But it seemed as if the mercies once displayed at Zarephath were again to be manifested; and that there was still a barrel and a cruse in reserve for the widow, who, humbly confident in the bounty of Heaven, had shared her last morsel with the supplicant in affliction. Her little ones met her at the threshold with cries of joy. During her short absence a stranger, visiting the house, had deposited in it a sack of flour; and the single bushel which it contained was so husbanded as to preserve their lives till the close of the siege. Their unknown benefactor was never revealed; but the pious mother was able to reply to her unbelieving kinswoman, 'The Lord hath provided for us.'"

21—24. (21) **was wroth,** De. iii. 26. **a fire,** symbol of outpouring of Div. judgment. (22) **salvation,** from all their disabilities and anxieties. (23, 24) **manna,** Ex. xvi. 14.[a]

*The finger of Providence.*—One of the three letters written by the Duke of Wellington from the field of Waterloo was a brief note which, having enumerated some who had fallen, ended thus: "I have escaped unhurt; the finger of Providence was on me." When the dreadful fight was over, the Duke's feelings, kept so long at the highest tension, gave way; and as he rode among the dying and the wounded, and saw the reeking carnage, and heard the roar of the vanquished and the shouts of the victors, fainter and fainter through the gloom of night, he wept, and soon after wrote the words which we have quoted from his letter. It is in such trying hours that man feels his frail mortality, instinctively turns to God, and, referring his actions to the will of Him who guides and governs all things, with reverence says, "The finger of Providence was on me." It was in the same hour of triumph that the conqueror uttered these memorable words: "Next to the calamity of losing a battle is that of gaining a victory."

25—29. (25) **angels' food,** lit. *bread of mighty ones,* or the finest, most delicate bread. Some think "food supplied by angel ministrations." (26) **east wind,** Nu. xi. 31. (27) **feathered fowls,** quails. (28) **let it fall,**[a] indicating that they had no trouble to obtain it, and were easily surfeited with it. (29) **well filled,** spoken in satire.

*Our Father's care.*—By a merciful provision of Providence, there is one kind of rice, the stalk of which grows at the same rate as the waters rise, so that the ear is always at the surface; and famine is averted even in years when the floods are heaviest

*a* Jno. vi. 31.

The ordinary manna gathered for daily use did presently corrupt, but that which was laid up before the Lord did keep without putrefaction. So our life, which we have here in the wilderness of this world, doth presently vanish; but our life which is hid with Christ in God never runs to death.

*a* "The word aptly describes the settling of these birds after a long flight, and wearied by their passage across the gulf. Pliny says that quails settle on the sails of ships by night, so as to sink sometimes

in Lower Siam and Cambodia. A pint or two of the seed was carried from Bangkok to Bassein by the Karen preachers who went with Mr. Carpenter to Siam in 1872. It has already increased to a hundred bushels, sufficient to supply a whole district, and will prove a great boon.

30—33. (30) while, *etc.*, Nu. xi. 33. (31) chosen men, or young and most vigorous. (32) all this, teaching of Divine chastisement. (33) consume, *etc.*, reference is to the fact that the whole generation died out prematurely.[a]

*Obstinacy of sin reproved* (*v.* 32).—In illustration of this I will set before you—I. The state of Israel in the wilderness. 1. They had begun their wickedness early ; 2. They continued it with scarcely any intermission ; 3. They were utterly irreclaimable by any dispensations, whether of mercy or judgment. II. Yet a parallel may be found in the state of the Christian Church at this day. 1. Our guilt resembles theirs ; 2. The gradations of our guilt are the same ; 3. The aggravations of our guilt are greater far. Personal application :—(1) What is your state at this time? (2) What will your state very shortly be?[b]

*The white flag.*—One evening the wife of the old flagman at a railway station said to her husband, "John, there will be a flag held out to-night—a flag in the hand of Jesus. It will not be a red flag, for there is no danger ; and it will not be a green one, for, thank God, there is no doubt ; but it will be a pure white flag, for all is perfect safety and peace, and I am very nearly at my journey's end." That night she died.

34—37. (34) slew them, their most vigorous and healthy warriors : as *v.* 31.[a] inquired early, or *earnestly*[b] after God. (35) their rock, De. xxxii. 4, 15. redeemer, De. vii. 8, xli. 14, xliv. 6, lxiii. 9.[c] (36) flatter,[d] offered the homage of insincerity. They returned to God under pressure of fear. (37) steadfast, *v.* 8.[e]

*The extent of God's mercy* (*vv.* 34—39).—Refer to the history recorded in the Psalm. I. The extent of their wickedness. 1. They were continually provoking God to anger ; 2. And what is this but a history of ourselves? II. The extent of His mercy. 1. Many times did He forgive them ; 2. It is thus also that He has dealt with us. See then—(1) What improvement we should make of afflictive providences ; (2) What under all circumstances should be the chief object of our attention.[f]

*Mercy in bereavements.*—An impenitent man in Boston was bereaved of a little son : he felt the stroke severely, and his attention was called up to the subject of religion. But his grief at length subsided, and serious impressions wore off. Ere long, God took away another little boy from him : then his convictions were renewed with his sorrows, and he sought and found comfort in Christ. Speaking afterwards of his experience in a conference and prayer-meeting, he sweetly said, "God, in taking away my son, revealed to me His own Son, a thousand times more precious than my own."[g]—*Hearier affliction.*—The physician, when he findeth that the potion which he hath given his patient will not work, he seconds it with one more violent ; but if he perceive the disease to be settled, then he puts him into a course of physic, so that he shall have at present but small comfort of his life. And thus doth the surgeon, too ; if a gentle plaister will not

the ships in the neighbouring sea."—*Perowne.*

*a* "Then He made their days vanish in a breath, and their years in sudden haste."—*Delitzsch.*
*v.* 31. *J. R. Pitman*, 290.
*v* 33. *W. Reading*, 34.
*b C. Simeon, M.A.* "A transcendent faith, a cheerful trust, turns the darkness of night into a pillar of fire, and the clouds by day into a perpetual glory. They who thus march on are refreshed even in the wilderness, and hear streams of gladness trickling among the rocks."—*Chapin.*

*a* Nu. xxi. 7; Is. xxvi. 16; Ho. v. 15, vii. 14.
*b* Ps. lxiii. 1.
*c* "The Masorites have noted here that this *v.* ends the first half of the Psalms."—*Wordsworth.*
*d* "Fr. *flater*, fr. Lat. *flare*, to blow. Used of the effect of music on the ear, and formerly employed to denote stroking and caressing."—*Woolrych.*
*e* 1 Cor. xv. 58.
*vv.* 34—37. *Bp. Brownrig*, ii. 197; *T. Ashton*, 125.
*v.* 37. *Bp. Hopkins*, 201.
*f C. Simeon, M.A.*
*g Whitecross.*

He is a conqueror worthy of no mean fame who triumphs over adversity.

"How blunt are all the arrows of thy quiver in comparison with those of guilt!" —*Blair.*

"Adversity borrows its sharpest sting from our impatience." —*Bishop Horne.*

*h Sp.*

*a* Ps. ciii. 14, 16.

"The gods have overwhelmed with ruin whole multitudes, merely by indulging them with everything for which they prayed." — *Juvenal.*

*b E. Paxton Hood.* "We see in a jeweller's shop, that, as there are pearls and diamonds and other precious stones, so there are files, cutting instruments, and many sharp tools for their polishing; and while they are in the workhouse they are continual neighbours to them, and often come under them. The Church is God's jewellery, His workshop, where His jewels are polishing for His palace and house; and those which He especially esteems and means to make most resplendent, He hath oftenest His tools upon."—*Leighton.*

*c Bp. Taylor.*

*a* Nu. xiv. 22.

*b* "Pr. Bk. Vers. has, *they moved*, *i.e.* they exasperated. *They* serve, then he applies that which is more corroding; and to prevent a gangrene, he makes use of his cauterising knife, and takes off the joint or member that is so ill affected. Even so God, when men profit not by such crosses as He hath formerly exercised them with, when they are not bettered by lighter afflictions, then He sends heavier, and proceeds from milder to sharper crosses. If the dross of their sins will not come off, He will throw them into the melting-pot again and again, crush them harder in the press, and lay on such irons as shall enter more deep into their souls. If He strikes and they grieve not, if they be so foolish that they will not know the judgment of their God, He will bring seven times more plagues upon them, cross upon cross, loss upon loss, trouble upon trouble, one sorrow on the neck of another, till they are in a manner wasted and consumed.[h]

**38, 39.** (38) **full of compassion,** Ex. xxxiv. 6; Nu. xiv. 18, 20. **turned . . away,** Is. xlviii. 9. (39) **but flesh,** Ge. vi. 3.[a] **a wind,** Job vii. 7. **passeth away,** or *goeth*, Ho. vi. 4, xiii. 3.

*Divine compassion.*—The lonely student sits in his still study. He determines to listen to the call, and give himself to God: but it shall be in some quiet sphere. But he finds himself called to the work of a city missionary: the way is dark, the homes are black, fœtid, and filthy. What cases come before him—what crowds to console, to warn, to instruct—from house to house, and only a moment at each, but that moment a text—a word—a warning word—a loving word—"How do you get on?" "Oh, I don't know myself." But just go on from strength to strength till they all appear before God in Zion. "He knoweth the way I take: when He hath tried me I shall come forth as gold. His path have I kept, and not declined." "Their roads are various, but one aim they take," and the destiny and their destination crowns all.[b]—*Affliction followed by heaven.*—When the Christian's last pit is digged, when he is descended into his grave, and finished his state of sorrows and suffering, then God opens the river of abundance, the rivers of life and never-ceasing felicities. As much as moments are exceeded by eternity, and the sighing of a man by the joy of an angel, and a salutary frown by the light of God's countenance, a few groans by the infinite and eternal hallelujahs,—so much are the sorrows of the saints to be undervalued in respect of what is deposited for them in the treasures of eternity. Their sorrows can die, but so cannot their joys. . . . Every chain is a ray of light, and every prison is a palace, and every loss is the purchase of a kingdom, and every affront in the cause of God is an eternal honour, and every day of sorrow is a thousand years of comfort, multiplied with a never-ceasing numeration: days without night, joys without sorrow, sanctity without sin, charity without stain, possession without fear, society without envying, communication of joys without lessening; and they shall dwell in a blessed country, where an enemy never entered, and from whence a friend never went away.[c]

**40—44.** (40) **provoke,** Nu. xiv. 11. "There were ten temptations."[a] **grieve,** Eph. iv. 30. (41) **limited,**[b] Heb. *tarah*, to note with a sign or mark. (42) **not his hand,** poetical for the signs of His working. **delivered them,** fr. the afflictions brought on their enemy. Goshen was free from the great plagues

(43) field of Zoan, *v.* 12. (44) blood, into a resemblance of blood, Ex. vii. 20.

*Limiting God* (*v.* 41).—We may be guilty of limiting God—I. In prescribing to Him certain methods and ways of action. In this case we do not suffer Him to be the Lord of His own favours, or to have the privilege of being His own director. II. In binding Him down to particular styles and seasons for working our deliverances. This is to rob Him of that which He hath put in His own power, and to arrogate the right of giving laws to our sovereign.[c]

*The sorrows of apostasy.*—Archbishop Cranmer, under the pressure of the queen and court, was induced to subscribe to the errors of Rome. Of this he soon repented, and took his former decided position, which brought upon him the wrath of Bloody Mary. When the flames of martyrdom were kindled around him, he thrust the hand that subscribed to his shame into the flames, and held it until consumed, often exclaiming, "That unworthy hand!"

45–49. (45) he sent, *etc.*, see Ex. viii. 17, 21, 22, 24. The E.V. "divers sorts" is a misunderstanding of the orig. word used.[a] (46) caterpillar,[b] poss. the locust in its larva state is referred to. (47) vines, in Ex. ix. these are not mentioned, and some have asserted that the vine was not cultivated in Egypt.[c] sycamore, 1 Ki. x. 27. (48) hot thunderbolts, *comp.* Ex. ix. 23. (49) evil angels, "a mission of angels of woe,"[d] evil is their mission not their character.

*Small things may be a great scourge* (*v.* 45).—The frog. I. This very harmless creature by its great multiplication became a great scourge; so things, words, deeds, in their due measure and season innocuous, become, when unseasonable and often repeated, a source of mischief (a laugh is a good thing, but much laughter, or at the wrong time, is madness; a shower of rain is refreshing, but long continued it may make a flood; a small fire may warm a house, but London was once destroyed by fire). II. Verse forty-five teaches us that instruments by which our good has been effected are not to be forgotten; the Israelites were not suffered to forget the frogs of Egypt. III. Even these creatures thus multiplied did Israel no harm; "nothing shall harm," etc.[e]

*Frogs in the East.*—"It is not difficult for an Englishman in an Eastern wet monsoon to form a tolerable idea of that plague of Egypt in which the frogs were in the 'houses, bed-chambers, beds, and kneading-troughs' of the Egyptians. In the season alluded to myriads send forth their constant croak in every direction. A new comer, on seeing them leap about the rooms, becomes disgusted, and forthwith begins an attack upon them; but the next evening will bring a return of his active visitors. It may appear almost incredible, but in one evening we killed upwards of forty of these guests in the Jaffna mission-house; they had principally concealed themselves in a small tunnel connected with the bathing-room, and their noise had become almost insupportable. I have been amused, when a man has been making a speech which has not given pleasure to his audience, to hear another person ask, 'What has that fellow been croaking about, like a frog of the wet monsoon?'"[f]—*Attacked by locusts.*—A detachment of Russian troops, bound for General Lazareff's expedition against the Turcomans, is reported by the *Kavkaz* to

*marked him with a mark, i.e.* they branded or stigmatised him."—*Targum*, and so *Delitzsch*.

"They irritated, *lit.* they pricked with a sharp instrument, like a *stylus*, used for making marks."—*Wordsworth*.

*c Charnock*.

"His confidence in heaven sunk by degrees."—*Claudius*.

*a* "He sent gadflies against them, wh. devoured them."—*Delitzsch*.

*b* Comp. Joel i. 4.

*c* "Vines were extensively cultivated in Egypt, and there were several different kinds of wine, one of which, the Mareotic, was famous among the Romans."—*R. S. Poole*.

"The mural paintings at Thebes, at Beni-hassan, and in the Pyramids, contain repres. of vineyards. Boys are seen frightening away the birds fr. the ripe clusters, men gather them and deposit them in baskets, and carry them to the wine press, &c."—*Perowne*.

*d Kay*.

*e Topics for Teachers*.

*f Roberts*.

*Afflictions sent to the wicked.*—Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Ex. ix. 14, 15, xiv. 24, 25). Ahaziah (2 Kings i. 1–4).

Gehazi (2 Kings v. 27). Jehoram (2 Chr. xxi. 12—19). Uzziah (2 Chr. xxvi. 19—21). Ahaz, etc. (2 Chr. xxviii. 5—8, 22).

"God is now spoiling us of what would otherwise have spoiled us. When God makes the world too hot for His people to hold, they will let it go."—*Powell.*

"Alas! what were our hopes without our fears! There is a mercy in affliction's smart it heals those wounds of sin which mock all human art."—*Rev. H. Caunter.*

have met with a curious misadventure near the Georgian town of Elizavetopol. At a few versts from the town the soldiers encountered the wing of an army of locusts reputed to be twenty miles in length and broad in proportion. The officer in charge did not like to turn back, repelled by mere insects, and, pushing on, soon became surrounded by the locusts. These appear to have mistaken the soldiers for trees, and swarmed by thousands around them, "crawling over their bodies, lodging themselves inside their helmets, penetrating their clothes and their knapsacks, filling the barrels of their rifles, and striving to force themselves into the unfortunate men's ears and noses." The commander gave the order for the troops to push on double quick for Elizavetopol, but the road was so blocked with locusts that the soldiers grew frightened, and, after wavering a few minutes, a regular stampede took place. Led by a non-commissioned officer of keen vision, who had observed a few huts a short distance from the road, the troops dashed across the fields, "slipping about over the crushed and greasy bodies of the locusts as though they had been on ice."[a] The huts were soon reached, and the officers rushed inside, but the refuge proved to be of little value, as the premises were already in the possession of the enemy. The peasants told the correspondent of the *Karkaz* that for days they had been besieged by the vermin, the insects filling the wells and tainting the water, crowding into the ovens and spoiling the bread, and preventing any food being cooked or stored. At intervals the villagers issued from their houses and made onslaughts on the locusts, killing them by thousands, and carting them away afterwards to the fields for manure. The soldiers were detained prisoners by the insects for forty-eight hours, and on their march to Elizavetopol, in the rear of the locust army, they found every blade of grass and green leaf destroyed, and the peasants reduced to beggary.

50—54. (50) **made a way,** lit. *levelled a path:* made a straight path. **their life,** *i.e.* their beasts, their cattle, regarded as their sustenance. (51) **chief . . strength,** "firstlings of manly strength."[a] **Ham,** land of Ham so called because peopled by the *Mitsrim*, the sons of Ham.[b] (52) **guided them,** as with a shepherd's care. (53) **sea overwhelmed,** Ex. xiv. 29. (54) **this mountain,**[c] either Zion is referred to, or the term is used generally for the mountain-country of Palestine.

*A plea for mercy.*—A man called at my house, some time ago, for charity. Thinking that the man's rags and poverty were real, I gave him a little money, some of my clothes, and a pair of shoes. After he had put them on, and gone out, I thought, "Well, after all, I have done you a bad turn very likely; for you will not get so much money now as before, because you will not look so wretched an object." Happening to go out a quarter of an hour afterwards I saw my friend; but he was not wearing the clothes I had given him—not he! Why, I should have ruined his business if I could have compelled him to look respectable. He had been wise enough to slip down an archway, take all the good clothes off, and put his rags on again. He only wore his proper livery; for rags are the livery of a beggar. The more ragged he looked, the more he would get. Just so is it with you. If you are to go to Christ, do not put on your good doings and feelings, or you will get nothing: go in your sins, they are your

*a* *Delitzsch.*

*b* Ge. x. 6.

*c* Ex. xv. 17; Is. xi. 9.

"Wilt thou draw near the nature of the gods? Draw near them then in being merciful: sweet mercy is nobility's true badge."—*Shakespeare.*

"This famine has a sharp and meagre face; 'tis death in an undress of skin and bone, where age and youth, their landmark ta'en away, look all one common sorrow."—*Dryden.*

livery. Your ruin is your argument for mercy; your poverty is your plea for heavenly alms; and your need is the motive for heavenly good.[d]—*The pestilences of the fourteenth century.*—The first two of the great pestilences of the fourteenth century were suffered by England in the years 1348—49, and 1360—61. The earlier of these, known as "the Black Death" or "the Great Mortality," was, of all plagues, the most desolating ever known in Europe. It was said that the plague entered Italy with a thick foul mist from the east. Unseasonable weather had caused general failure of crops. In the spring of 1347, before the plague, bread was being distributed to the poor in Italian cities; 94,000 twelve-ounce loaves were given away daily from large public bakehouses erected in Florence alone. Famine preceded pestilence; and of the famine many died. The "Black Death" had raged on the northern shores of the Black Sea before it was brought thence to Constantinople. Thence it passed, in 1347, to Cyprus, Sicily, Marseilles, and some of the seaports of Italy. It spread over the Mediterranean islands, and reached Avignon in January, 1348. Petrarch's Laura was there among its victims. It spread through Italy and France, was in Florence by April, passed into Germany, entered England in August, but three months then passed before it had reached London. In 1349 it was sweeping over Northern Europe, but it did not reach Russia till 1351. Those were not days of accurate statistics, and we may say nothing of the 23,840,000 said to have died by this plague in the East; but of western towns, civilised enough to have some notion of the number of their inhabitants, Venice said that there perished 100,000 of her people, or three-fourths of the whole population; Florence said she had lost 60,000; Avignon, 60,000; Paris, 50,000; London, 100,000; Norwich, 51,100; Yarmouth, 7,052. In many places half the population died; some little towns and villages lost all by death and flight. Of the Franciscan Friars in Germany there were said to have perished 124,434, and in Italy 30,000. Merchants sought favour of God by laying down their treasures at the altar; monks shunned the gifts for the contagion that they brought, and closed their gates, and still had the vain riches of this world thrown by despairing men over their convent walls. In the Hôtel Dieu, at Paris, when five hundred were dying daily, pious women, Sisters of Charity, were about them with human ministrations and words of Divine consolation. These nurses were perishing themselves daily of the disease from which they would not flinch in the performance of their duty; and as they fell at their posts there never was a want of other gentlewomen to press in and carry on their sacred work. The Black Death was followed in England by a murrain among cattle. It has been estimated by a modern writer that this great pestilence destroyed a fourth part of the inhabitants of Europe. The terror of this was fresh when pestilence, which broke out again at Avignon, in 1360, was again scourging us in 1361. Of the second pestilence it was observed that the richer classes suffered by it in larger proportion than before.[e]

55—58. (55) by line, "as an inheritance measured out and partitioned."[a] (56) tempted, *etc.*, *vv.* 17, 18, 41.[b] (57) deceitful bow, on wh. an archer can place no confidence; wh. will not respond to his aim. (58) jealousy, *see* Nu. xxv. 11.[c]

*d Spurgeon.*

*e Liby. of Eng. Lit.*, ed. by *Prof. Morley.*

"1. Instead of complaining, patiently wait for and upon God; while they were complaining the quails were coming, and they probably would have come had they not complained; they were God's people, and He knew what things they had need of. 2. When sorely pressed by cruel enemies, remember that as '. . . . the lonely mountain partridge seeks afar his scanty cover,' so we may look to the hills whence cometh our help. 3. Unjustly obtained advantages never ultimately benefit; not only does one often lose them in the midst of his days, but in the end shall see and feel his folly; he will be a fool for all his pains, leaving what he laboured for, and losing the true riches." — *Topics.* "You have chosen 'the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, other things therefore shall be added unto you;' and if any which you desire should not be added, comfort yourselves with this thought, that you have the good part which can never be taken away."—*Doddridge.*

*a Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* "The special act of provocation here is the

worship of idols in the high places."—*Perowne.*

*c* De. xxxii. 16, 21. *vv.* 56, 57. *Dr. J. Jamieson*, i. 326. *vv.* 56—59. *H. Owen*, ii. 1.

*d C. Buck.*

*a* "The mode of expression is very emphatic: that God was so offended with the sins of His people that He was forced to forsake the one place in the whole world which He had chosen."—*Calvin.*

*vv.* 57—59. *J. Carrington*, 84.

*b H. W. Beecher.*

*a* "The utter desolation of the land strikingly pictured by its *silence*. Neither the joyous strains of the marriage song, nor the sad wail of the funeral chant fell on the ear. It was a land of silence, a land of the dead."—*Perowne.*

"How poor are they who have not patience! What wound did ever heal, but by degrees?"—*Shakespeare.*

*b Burder.*

*c Roberts.*

"Famine so fierce that what's denied men's use—ev'n deadly plants, and herbs of poisonous juice, wild hunger eat; and to prolong our breath, we

*The patience of Divine mercy.*—When Alexander encamped before a city, he used to set up a light to give notice to those within that if they came forth to him while that light lasted, they should have quarter; if otherwise, no mercy was to be expected. But such is the mercy and patience of God to sinners, that He sets up light after light, and waits year after year. When they have done their worst against Him, then He comes with His heart full of love, and makes a proclamation of grace, that if now at last they will accept of mercy, they shall have it.[d]

59—61. (59) **wroth,** *etc.*, passages attributing human feelings to God require to be carefully explained. In God wrath is righteous altogether, without the passion that mars man's anger. **abhorred Israel,** not the people, but their sinful and defiling ways. (60) **forsook,** 1 Sa. iv. 11.[a] (61) **strength,** the *ark of the covenant*, as Ps. cxxxii. 8. **glory,** 1 Sa. iv. 21.

*Majesty of the Divine patience.*—Did you ever, in a summer's day, when you had drawn from the bottom of the well the cooling draught to slake your thirst, stand and dream, and gaze at a drop, orbed and hanging from the bucket's edge, reflecting the light of the sun? What the rounded form and size of that drop is in comparison with the whole earth itself, that the round earth itself is in comparison with God's majesty of being, or degree of magnitude! And that such an one, living in such a wise—so far above the earth; so far above its inhabitants; so far above the noblest spirit that stands in the unlost purity of heaven—that such an one should deal with His erring creature with a gentleness and patience such as characterise the administration of God towards man, is sublime and wonderful![b]

62—64. (62) **unto the sword,** as narrated 1 Sa. iv. 10. (63) **fire,** evidently the fire of war is meant. **not given,** *etc.*, lit. were not praised in the nuptial song.[a] (64) **priests,** Hophni and Phinehas. **widows,** see case specially referred to, 1 Sa. iv. 19, 20.

*Not given in marriage* (*v.* 63).—This is described as one of the effects of God's anger upon Israel. In Hindoo families, sometimes, the marriage of daughters is delayed; this is, however, always considered as a great calamity and disgrace. If a person sees girls more than twelve years of age unmarried in a family, he says, "How is it that that Brahmin can sit at home, and eat his food with comfort, when his daughters, at such an age, remain unmarried?"[b]—*Absence of mourning* (*v.* 64).—When the cholera swept off such multitudes, the cries from every house had a fearful effect on the passers by; but after some time, though the scourge remained, the people ceased to lament, asking, "Why should we mourn? the *Amma*," *i.e.* the goddess, "is at her play." Thus, instead of the shrieks and howls, so common on such occasions, scarcely a sigh or whisper was heard from the survivors."[c]—*Sorrow, the way to receive it.*—Our instinct, our feelings, our hopes, all claim joy, not sorrow, as our portion. Christ sets His seal to these aspirations. Sorrow is but for a time, joy is for ever. He will set the impress of immortal power upon all the innocent and far-reaching wishes of our hearts. This the close of the incident of the raising of Lazarus teaches us, for the broken home is made one again, the gap they mourned over is filled, the joy of the sisters is complete, for Lazarus is

there, and Christ is there. Martha can go joyfully about her toil again. Mary can sit once more at Jesus' feet, and glance with untold gladness now at her restored brother, now at the Redeemer.

"Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits—
But he was dead, and there he sits,
And He that brought him back is there.

"Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, where her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face
To Him who is the Life indeed."

And what is all this but a sweet prophecy of the joys that remain for the people of God? Sorrow enters our doors now, but let us remember she is only a guest come to tarry with us for the night-time of life. Let us treat her with the courtesy due to a guest, though her presence be irksome and her manners rough. Her elder sister, Joy, will greet us when the morning breaks over the shore of God's fair land. She will take us by the hand and set us in our Father's home, where the many mansions are, and we shall be glad indeed; for no sorrow shall be there, no sighing, no tears; and our loved ones will be there, and He who loved us and gave Himself for us, who was dead and is now alive, will be there; and from that sunny home we shall go out no more.[d]

65 — 69. (65) **awaked**, a strong poetic figure.[a] (66) **hinder parts**, better trans. *He smote His adversaries backward:* defeating them utterly. (67) **Joseph**, the tribe of Ephraim from this time ceased to provide a centre for the national religion. (68) **Judah**, "the sanctuary was really on the borders of Judah and Benjamin." (69) **like**, *etc., i.e.* "exalted as the heights of heaven, stable as the earth with its undeviating natural laws."

*Smiting in the hinder parts* (*v.* 66).—Dr. Boothroyd, "And smote his enemies in the hinder parts, and he put them to perpetual disgrace." Some commentators think this alludes "to the emerods inflicted on the Philistines;" but the figure is used in reference to those who are conquered, and who consequently show their backs when running away. "I will make that fellow show his back," means, "I will cause him to run from me." It is also considered exceedingly disgraceful to be beaten on that part.[b]

70—72. (70) **chose David**, 1 Sa. xvi. 11, 12. (71) **ewes**, properly the *milch* ewes, those having their young beside them. **feed Jacob**,[a] 2 Sa. vii. 7, 8. (72) **skilfulness**, or *deftness*.

*Aspects of God.*—That God does assume a variety of aspects, the soul exercised in spiritual things well knows. It recognises Him as ever the same God, although under different developments of Himself; just as a man knows that a prism is the same prism, although it exhibits different colours under different circumstances, and at different times; or as a man knows that a building is one and the same, though at one time the most prominent object be its massive buttress, and at another its tapering spire. At one time, the prominent idea of God is that of a Father; and at another that of a Ruler: now He is the

greedily devour our certain death; the soldier in th' assault of famine falls, and ghosts, not men, are watching on the walls." —*Dryden.*

"Affliction is the good man's shining scene: prosperity conceals his brightest ray; as night to stars, woe lustre gives to man."—*Young.*

*d W. B. Carpenter, B.A.*

*a* "The Psalmist, in an anthropomorphic figure, depicts the Almighty awaking. 'As one (hitherto) sleeping, as a warrior exulting by reason of wine,' *i.e.* as one who rouses himself from a lethargic slumber, or as one who has renewed his energies, exhausted in battle, by the exhilarating influence of wine." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b Roberts.*

*a* "There is a play on the verb *rāâh*, fed, inasmuch as it is used primarily of giving food to flocks, but also by a kind of stereotyped metaphor signifies the *tending* of a people by a king, judge, or prophet. He who had hitherto tended a few sheep was called away to tend a sacred nation."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

Refuge: and now the Shadow for the afflicted soul: as is man's need, so is God's development of Himself toward him.[b]

[b] *P. B. Power.*

## *PSALM THE SEVENTY-NINTH.*

author,—unknown: date, either that of Jeremiah, or of the Maccabees

*A lamentation over the destruction of Jerusalem.*

1–4. (1) heathen, whose presence in Jehovah's temple was regarded as a defilement.[a] on heaps, lit. *they have made Jerusalem heaps* of ruins.[b] (2) dead, *etc.*, the lack of proper tending of the dead was in ancient times regarded as a terrible distress and indignity.[c] (3) shed, or poured out. (4) reproach,[d] *see* Ps. xliv. 13.

*Executions without the city* (*vv.* 2, 3).—Criminals were at other times executed in public; and then commonly without the city. To such executions without the gate, the Psalmist undoubtedly refers in this complaint. The last clause admits of two senses. 1st. There was no friend or relations left to bury them. 2nd. None were allowed to perform this last office. The despotism of Eastern princes often proceeds to a degree of extravagance which is apt to fill the mind with astonishment and horror. It has been thought, from time immemorial, highly criminal to bury those who had lost their lives by the hand of an executioner, without permission. In Morocco, no person dares to bury the body of a malefactor without an order from the emperor; and Windus, who visited that country, speaking of a man who was sawed in two, informs us that "his body must have remained to be eaten by the dogs, if the emperor had not pardoned him—an extravagant custom to pardon a man after he is dead; but unless he does so, no person dares bury the body." To such a degree of savage barbarity it is probable the enemies of God's people carried their opposition, that no person dared to bury the dead bodies of their innocent victims.[e]—*The murder of Coligny.*—The massacre was to begin with the assassination of Coligny, and that part of the dreadful work had been assigned to the Duke of Guise. The moment he heard the signal, the Duke mounted his horse and, accompanied by his brother and 1,300 gentlemen and soldiers, galloped off for the admiral's lodgings. He found Anjou's guards, with their red cloaks, and their lighted matches, posted round it; they gave the duke with his armed retinue instant admission into the courtyard. To slaughter the halberdiers of Navarre, and force open the inner entrance of the admiral's lodgings, was the work of but a few minutes. They next mounted the stairs, while the duke and his gentlemen remained below. Awakened by the noise, the admiral got out of bed, and, wrapping his dressing-gown round him and leaning against the wall, he bade Merlin, his minister, join with him in prayer. One of his gentlemen at that moment rushed into the room. "My lord," said he, "God calls us to Himself!" "I am prepared to die," replied the admiral; "I need no more the help of men; therefore, farewell, my friends; save yourselves, if it be still possible." They all left him and escaped by the roof of the house. Téligny, his son-in-law, fleeing in this way, was shot, and rolled into the street. A German servant alone remained behind with his master. The door of the chamber was now forced open, and seven of the murderers entered, headed by Behme of Lorraine, and Achille Petrucci of Sienna, creatures of

[a] "The defilement and desecration of the temple was a special feature of the persecution under the Syrian king, Antiochus Epiphanes."
[b] Mic. iii. 12; Jer. xxvi. 18.
[c] "Sophocles' play of *Antigone* turns upon the natural desire to show respect by covering and burying the dead."
[d] Ia. v. 1; Da. ix. 16.
[e] *Paxton.*
"In England, likewise, the Protestants have had a share in the cruelties practised by the Romish clergy and church. For upon Queen Mary's coming to the crown, all the sanguinary penal laws were revived; and in the space of five years and four months which that bloody woman reigned, there were burnt and roasted, for their religion, five bishops, twenty-one divines, eight gentlemen, eighty-four artificers, one hundred husbandmen, servants, and labourers, twenty-six wives, twenty widows, nine virgins, two boys and two infants;

the Duke of Guise. "Art thou Coligny?" said Behme, presenting himself before his victim, and awed by the perfect composure and venerable aspect of the admiral. "I am," replied Coligny; "young man, you ought to respect my grey hairs; but do what you will, you can shorten my life only by a few days." The villain replied by plunging his weapon into the admiral's breast; the rest closing round struck their daggers into him. "Behme," shouted the duke from below, "hast done?" "'Tis all over," cried the assassin from the window. "But M. d'Angoulême," replied the duke, "will not believe it till he see him at his feet." Taking up the corpse, Behme threw it over the window, and as it fell on the pavement the blood spurted on the faces and clothes of the two lords. The duke, taking out his handkerchief and wiping the face of the murdered man, said, "'Tis he, sure enough," and kicked the corpse in its face. A servant of the Duke of Nevers cut off the head, and carried it to Catherine de Medici and the king. The trunk was exposed for some days to disgusting indignities; the head was embalmed, to be sent to Rome; the bloody trophy was carried as far as Lyons, but there all trace of it disappears.[f]

sixteen perished in gaols, and twelve were buried in dunghills. Others affirm that, in the first two years of the persecution, in 1555, eight hundred were put to death. Had Mary lived, the same barbarous tragedy would have been acted in Ireland."—*L. M. Stretch.*

*f Dr. Wylie.*

**5—7.** (5) how long, Ps. xiii. 1. jealousy, *see* Ex. xx. 5. like fire, De. xxxii. 22. (6) pour, *etc.*, comp. Je. x. 25. (7) devoured, Jer. adds, *and consumed.* dwelling place, or *pâsture*,[a] referring to the pastoral district. Some, however, prefer to think that by this term the sanctuary is meant.

*God worketh slowly* (*v.* 5).—

God worketh slowly; and a thousand years
He takes to lift His hand off. Layer on layer
He made earth, fashioned it and hardened it
Into the great, bright, useful thing it is;
Its seas, life-crowded, and soul-hallowed lands,
He girded with the girdle of the sun,
That set its bosom glowing like Love's own
Breathless embrace, close clinging as for life;
Veined it with gold, and dusted it with gems,
Lined it with fire, and round its heart-fire bowed
Rock-ribs unbreakable; until at last
Earth took her shining station as a star
In Heaven's dark hall, high up the crowd of worlds.
All this and thus did God; and yet it ends.
The ball He rolled and rounded melts away
E'en now to its constituent atomies.[b]

*a* "The physical and moral consequences of sin pass on from generation to generation, but 'Scripture nowhere teaches that a man is guilty in the sight of God for any sins but his own. Sinning himself, he allows the deeds of his fathers;' he is a partaker in their iniquities; but his condemnation, if he be condemned, is for his own transgression, not for those of his fathers."—*Perowne.*

Is. lxiv. 10, 11.

"Patience is the ballast of the soul, that will keep it from rolling and tumbling in the greatest storms; and he that will venture out without this to make him sail even and steady will certainly make shipwreck and drown himself, first in the cares and sorrows of this world, and then in perdition."—*Hopkins.*

*b Bailey.*

**8—13.** (8) former iniquities, the iniquities of our forefathers[a] of former generations. prevent us,[b] *see* on Job iii. 12. (9) for . . name, Ez. xxxvi. 22. purge away, lit. *cover over*, Heb. *cappêr*. (10) where . . God? Ps. xlii. 3. revenging, or avenging. (11) appointed to die, *Heb.* sons of death. Reference is to those who were carried away captive by Antiochus. (12) our neighbours, those dwelling round, who scorned God's people while under suffering. (13) pasture, *see on v.* 7.

*The sighing of the prisoner* (*v.* 11).—To illustrate the miserable condition of an Oriental prisoner, Chardin relates a story of a very great Armenian merchant, who for some reason was thrown into prison. So long as he bribed the jailer with large donations, he was treated with the greatest kindness and attention; but

upon the party who sued the Armenian presenting a considerable sum, first to the judge and afterward to the jailer, the prisoner first experienced a change of treatment. His privileges were retrenched; he was then closely confined; then treated with such inhumanity as not to be permitted to drink but once in twenty-four hours, and this in the hottest time of the year; and no person was suffered to see him but the servants of the prison. At length he was thrown into a dungeon, where he was in a quarter of an hour brought to the point which all this severe usage was intended to gain. After such a relation, we cannot be surprised to find the sacred writers placing so strong an emphasis on "the sighing of the prisoner," and speaking of its coming before God, and the necessity of Almighty power being exerted for his deliverance.[c]—*Charles IX.*—No long time after the perpetration of the massacre, Charles IX. began to be visited with remorse. The awful scene would not quit his memory. By day, whether engaged in business or mingling in the gaieties of the court, the sights and sounds of the massacre would rise unbidden before his imagination; and at night its terrors would return in his dreams. As he lay in his bed, he would start up from his broken slumber, crying out, "Blood, blood!" Not many days after the massacre, there came a flock of ravens, and alighted upon the roof of the Louvre. As they flitted to and fro they filled the air with their dismal croakings. This would have given no uneasiness to most people; but the occupants of the Louvre had guilty consciences. The impieties and witchcrafts in which they had lived had made them extremely superstitious, and they saw in the ravens other creatures than they seemed, and heard in their screams more terrible sounds than merely earthly ones. The ravens were driven away; the next day, at the same hour, they returned, and so did they for many days in succession. There, duly at the appointed time, were the sable visitants of the Louvre, performing their gyrations round the roofs and chimneys of the ill-omened palace, and making its courts resound with the echoes of their horrid cawings. This did not tend to lighten the melancholy of the king. One night he awoke with fearful sounds in his ears. It seemed—so he thought—that a dreadful fight was going on in the city. There were shoutings and shrieks and curses, and mingling with these were the tocsin's knell and the sharp ring of firearms—in short, all those dismal noises which had filled Paris on the night of the massacre. A messenger was dispatched to ascertain the cause of the uproar. He returned to say that all was at peace in the city, and that the sounds which had so terrified the king were wholly imaginary. These incessant apprehensions brought on at last an illness. The king's constitution, sickly from the first, had been drained of any original vigour it ever possessed by the vicious indulgences in which he lived, and into which his mother, for her own vile ends, had drawn him; and now his decline was accelerated by the agonies of remorse—the Nemesis of St Bartholomew. Charles was rapidly approaching the grave.[d]

*b* "Never used in the sense of *hinder* in the Bible or books of its age."—*Woolrych.*
*v.* 9. *Dr. M. Hole,* i. 558.
*v.* 11. *J. Rose,* 181.
*c Paxton.*
The Spanish Inquisition was established by Ferdinand and Isabella; and from 1481 to 1788 it is calculated to have condemned to punishment 343,522 persons. Of this number 34,382 were sentenced to the flames, 17,690 were burnt in effigy, and 291,450 were imprisoned, and their property confiscated. During the forty-six years of the reign of Philip V. alone, 14,086 persons were condemned to punishment, of whom 1,574 suffered by fire!
"If you take exceptional cases of the men who are, for the sake of integrity and principle, persecuted and cast out, there is more joy in a prison than the palace that is over it. There was more joy on a cross than among the barbarous soldiers who had the power to crucify the Holy One. There is often more joy in men who are poor than among the rich. There is more joy in those who give their life and their everything, than in those who are rich because they give nothing."—*Beecher.*
*d Dr. Wylie.*

## PSALM THE EIGHTIETH.

author,—unknown: date, uncertain

*A prayer in time of national disaster.*

*Shoshannim-Eduth*, see titles of Ps. xlv., lxix.

1—3. (1) leadest Joseph, Ge. xlviii. 15. dwellest, better, *sittest throned above.* Ps. xcix. 1. (2) before, *etc.*, these three tribes are the children of Rachel.[a] (3) turn us again, an expression suitable to any recovery from calamity, and not to be strictly applied to return from captivity. face to shine, Ps. iv. 6, lxvii. 1.

*The God that dwelleth between the cherubim* (*v.* 1).—I. Let us consider the character of God as represented under this peculiar phrase. 1. He was a God of glory; 2. Of holiness and justice; 3. And also as a God of mercy, love, and goodness. II. Consider the burden of the prayer. 1. It asks for a special manifestation of God; 2. That He would interpose for the deliverance and comfort of His people.[b]

*The Shepherd of Israel* (*v.* 1).—Now can you watch such a scene and not think of that Shepherd who leadeth Joseph like a flock; and of another river, which all His sheep must cross? He, too, goes before, and, as in the case of this flock, they who keep near Him fear no evil. They hear His sweet voice saying, "When thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods they shall not overflow thee." With eye fastened on Him, they scarcely see the stream or feel its cold and threatening waves. The great majority, however, "linger shivering on the brink, and fear to launch away." They lag behind, look down upon the dark river, and, like Peter on stormy Gennesaret when faith failed, they begin to sink. Then they cry for help, and not in vain. The Good Shepherd hastens to their rescue, and none of all His flock can ever perish. Even the weakest lambkins are carried safely over. I once saw flocks crossing the Jordan "to Canaan's fair and happy land," and there the scene was even more striking and impressive. The river was broader, the current stronger, and the flocks larger, while the shepherds were more picturesque and Biblical. The catastrophe, too, with which many poor sheep were threatened—of being swept down into that mysterious Sea of Death which swallows up the Jordan itself—was more solemn and suggestive.[c]

4—7. (4) Lord God of hosts, "a form not common in the Psalms, but occurring in Ps. lix. 5, lxxxiv. 8."[a] angry, lit. *hast thou smoked.*[b] against, lit. *with*, in the sense of *notwithstanding*, in spite of.[c] (5) bread of tears,[d] as if tears were their food. great measure, *lit.* threefold. (6) strife, an object which they vied with one another in assailing. neighbours, petty states bordering their country. among themselves, or for themselves; for their own satisfaction. (7) turn, *etc.*, as *v.* 3.

*Anger of God against His praying people* (*v.* 4).—I. Why God may be angry with His people. 1. For their dulness in attainment of a knowledge of His will; 2. For the weakness of their faith; 3. For the earthliness of their affections; 4. For the evil of their spirits; 5. For their unprofitableness in His service; 6. For their apostasy. II. Why God may be angry with the prayers of His people. 1. When they are formal; 2. When they are without charity and love; 3. When they are substituted for obedience; 4. When they are not presented in faith. III. How

*a* "These three tribes are doubtless here associated as having occupied the station nearest to the holy of holies during the march through the wilderness."—*Jennings and Lowe.* See *J. Alting*, Op. ii. pars. 3, 148.

*b J. S. Broad, M.A.*

"Patience was like a privy coat upon His soul, that when the devil struck at Him, he was stricken himself; when death came to kill Him, he was killed himself; and all their shot could not hurt Him, because of His preservation which He had about Him, like Samson's hair which saved him from all his enemies."—*Henry Smith.*

*c Dr. Thomson.*

*a Spk. Com.*

*b* Comp. Eng. word *fume.*

*c* "That wh. seems so mysterious, that wh. calls for the expostulation and the entreaty is, that even whilst they pray, *in spite of* that prayer, God's wrath is hot against them."—*Perowne.*

*d* "Still an Eastern figure for affliction."—*Fausset.*

*e Dr. J. Burns.*

*f Roberts.*

*g Ibid.*

"O Lord God, I thank Thee that Thou wouldst have me to be poor, and a beggar upon the earth. I have no house, land, possessions, or money to leave. Thou hast given me a wife and children: to Thee I return them: nourish, teach, and save them, as hitherto Thou hast me, O Father of the fatherless, and Judge of the widow! O my heavenly Father, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the God of all consolations, I thank Thee that Thou hast revealed Thy Son Jesus Christ to me, on whom I have believed, whom I have professed, whom I have loved, whom I have celebrated; whom the Bishop of Rome and all the multitude do persecute and reproach. I pray Thee, O Lord Jesus Christ, receive my soul. My heavenly Father, although I am taken out of this life—though I must now lay down this body—yet I certainly know I shall dwell with Thee for ever; neither can I by any be plucked out of Thy hands. God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in His name shall never perish, but have everlasting life.

we should regard the possibility of Divine anger. 1. There should be earnest inquiry; 2. Faithful self-examination; 3. We should seek a spirit of self-devotion; 4. Make a believing appeal to our Divine advocate.[e]

*Note on v.* 4.—Hebrew, "wilt thou smoke?" Ainsworth, "Jehovah. God of hosts, how long wilt Thou smoke against the prayer of Thy people?" Of an angry man it is said, "He is continually smoking." "My friend, why do you smoke so to-day?" "This smoke drives me away; I cannot bear it." "How many days is this smoke to remain in my house?" "What care I for the smoke? It does not hurt me."[f]—*Drinking tears* (*v.* 5).—When a master or a father is angry, he says to his children or servants, "Yes, in future you shall have rice and the water of your eyes to eat." "You shall have the water of your eyes in abundance to drink." "Alas! alas! I am ever drinking tears."[g]—*Mistaken prayer.*—A tradition current in Wales is a striking illustration of these words:—An old woman, who was very ungodly, was once travelling from Cardiff to a neighbouring town, some twelve miles distant, in her donkey-cart, for the sake of selling her vegetables. It was a winter's day: the east wind was blowing, and drove the hail and sleet right in her face in a most pitiable manner, calling from her sundry curses and evil exclamations. As she nearly reached the end of her journey, however, wearied out with cursing, she began, in a most irreverent manner, to pray that the wind might turn to her back. Extraordinary to relate, the wind *did* turn, and for a ride of five minutes she had the comfort of a tolerably easy journey. But, alas! poor, short-sighted creature! she finished the sale of her goods, and at almost dark started to return home; but the wind, which she had been so urgent should change, had done so, and was again in her face. She forgot, when she prayed in the morning, that it might turn; that to go home she would have to turn too, and then be exposed to its violence during the cold and dark night. The storm, too, had increased in fury, and it was not till the next morning that the old woman reached her native town.—*A Hottentot learning to pray.*—It is related of a poor Hottentot in Southern Africa, whose heart was awakened to a sense of sin, and who lived in the family of a Dutchman where family prayer was observed, that as one day his master read the parable of the Pharisee and Publican, "Two men went up into the temple to pray," he looked earnestly at the reader, and whispered,—"Now I'll learn how to pray." The Dutchman read on. "God, I thank Thee that I am not as other men——" "No, I am not, but I am worse," whispered the Hottentot. Again the Dutchman read, "I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all I possess." "I don't do that. I can't pray so. What shall I do?" said the anxious savage. The good man read on until he came to the publican who "would not lift up so much as his eyes to heaven." "That's me!" cried his hearer. "Stood afar off," read the other. "That's where I am," said the Hottentot. "But smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner!" "That's me, that's my prayer!" cried the awakened African; and smiting on his dark breast, he cried, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" until, like the poor publican, he went down to his house a saved and happy man.

8—13. (8) a vine, this fig. is borrowed from Ge. xlix. 22. cast out, Ps. xliv. 2. (9) preparedst room, by destroying the Canaanites. (10) goodly cedars, Heb. *cedars of God.* (11) sea, the Mediterranean. river, the Euphrates.[a] (12) broken down, *etc.*, comp. Is. v. 5. (13) boar . . wild beast,[b] general description of the invaders.

*The wild boar* (*v.* 13).—Irby and Mangles, in their travels, say: "Presently we heard a hue and cry from all quarters, and soon perceived a large wild boar, with his bristles erect, beset by all the dogs; everybody running eagerly to the pursuit. He was found behind one of the tents; they chased him all through the camp, and two Arabs on horseback with spears soon joined in the pursuit. The animal, however, kept both men and dogs at bay, and finally got off with only one wound. We passed a valley grubbed up in all directions in furrows by the wild boars; the soil had all the appearance of having been literally ploughed up." In his *Researches in Greece*, the Rev. J. Hartley has the following passage. His friend, Mr. Leeves, was travelling in the dusk of the evening to Therapia. Passing a vineyard, he saw an animal of large size rush from among the vines, and cross the road with great precipitation. "His attendant exclaimed, 'Wild boar! wild boar!' 'What has the wild boar to do in the vineyard?' asked Mr. Leeves. 'Oh!' replied the Greek, 'tis the custom of wild boars to frequent the vineyards and to devour the grapes.' And it is astonishing what havoc a wild boar is capable of effecting during a single night. What with eating, and what with trampling under foot, he will destroy a vast quantity of grapes." Burckhardt remarks: "We met a wild boar of great size; these animals are very common in the Ghor, and my companions told me that the Arabs of the valley are unable to cultivate the common barley on account of the eagerness with which the wild swine feed upon it; they are therefore obliged to grow a less esteemed sort, which the swine do not touch."

14—16. (14) return, *see v.* 3. (15) vineyard, better, *the stock.* Heb. *cannâh.* madest strong, didst carefully rear till it reached maturity.[a] (16) cut down, *comp.* Jno. xv. 6. The word is used of thorns cut for burning.

*Recollections of mercies.*—Recollections of former mercies is the proper antidote against a temptation to despair in the day of calamity; and as in the Divine dispensations, which are always uniform and like themselves, whatever has happened happens again when the circumstances are similar, the experience of ancient times is to be called in to our aid and duly consulted. Nay, we may remember the time when we ourselves were led to compose and utter a song of joy and triumph, on occasion of signal mercies vouchsafed to us. Upon these topics we should, in the night of affliction, commune with our own hearts and make diligent search, as Daniel did in Babylon, into the cause, the nature, and the probable continuance of our troubles, with the proper methods of shortening and bringing them to an end, by suffering them to have their intended and full effect, in a sincere repentance and thorough reformation.[b]

17—19. (17) man of thy right hand, the people of Israel, "so called as delivered by God's power and strengthened for His

Amen."—*Martin Luther's Last Will and Prayer.*

*a* "The extreme limit of the Israelitish kingdom in its ideal extent, nearly realised under Solomon."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Je. v. 6. The only Bib. reference to the *boar.* *v.* 9. *Dr. G. Croft, Bamp. Lec.* 85.

"The noblest heart on earth is but a trickling stream from a faint and shallow fountain, compared with the ineffable soul and heart of God the Everlasting Father. The pity of God is *like* a father's in all that is tender, strong, and full, but not in scope and power. For every one of God's feelings moves in the sphere of the infinite."—*Beecher.*

*a* Is. xliv. 14.

"There is more mercy in the merciful God than e'er inhabited the pregnant eyes of men, who waste unprofitable tears for all imaginable woes, and leave the poor, uncomforted, to wail their own."—*Coleridge.*

*b Bp. Horne.*

"The man whom thou art wont to protect with thy right hand."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*a Spk. Com.*

v. 17. *Bp. Cowper*, 785; *Alex. Pirie, Wks.* 31; *T. Cruso*, 95.
*b C. Simeon, M.A.*
*c Burder.*

"Ejaculations are short prayers darted up to God on emergent occasions. They are the artillery of devotion, and their principal use is against the fiery darts of the devil. In barred havens, so choked up with the envious sands that great ships drawing many feet of water cannot come near, lighter and lesser pinnaces may freely and safely arrive. When we are time-bound, place-bound, or person-bound, so that we cannot compose ourselves to make a large solemn prayer, this is the right instant for ejaculations, whether orally uttered or only poured forth inwardly in the heart. Ejaculations bind not men to any bodily observance, only being the spiritual half, which maketh them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment."—*Thomas Fuller.*
*d R. T. S.*

**author and date,—unknown**

*Psalm for recitation at a festival.*

*Gittith*, see title Ps. viii.
*a* Le. xxiii. 24; Nu. xxix. 1; Ps. xlvii. 1.

special service."[a] (18) **quicken us**, with inward life; **the** secret of all right and good conduct. (19) **turn**, as *v.* 3.

*The efficacy of prayer* (*vv.* 17—19).—I. How to approach God in a season of trouble. 1. We are especially invited to seek God at such times: 2. The Lord Jesus is the appointed Head of the Church: 3. Through Him then we must seek for God's effectual help. II. What should we seek for at His hands? 1. The communications of His grace; 2. The manifestations of His favour. III. The fruit and consequences of accepted prayer. 1. Stability in God's ways; 2. The everlasting enjoyment of His favour. Hence—(1) See how little reason there is for any man to despond; (2) How little ground there is for any one to glory.[b]

*The man of Thy right hand* (*v.* 17).—If we would understand the genuine import of this phrase we must attend to a custom which obtained in Judæa and other Eastern countries. At meals the master of the feast placed the person whom he loved best on his right hand, as a token of love and respect; and as they sat on couches, in the intervals between the dishes, when the master leaned upon his left elbow, the man at his right hand, leaning also on his, would naturally repose his head on the master's bosom, while at the same time the master laid his right hand on the favourite's shoulder or side, in testimony of his favourable regard.[c]—*Moravian brethren.*—During the rebellion in Ireland, in 1793, the rebels had long meditated an attack on the Moravian settlement at Grace Hill, Wexford county. At length they put their threat into execution, and a large body of them marched to the town. When they arrived there they saw no one in the streets nor in the houses. The brethren had long expected this attack, but, true to their Christian profession, they would not have recourse to arms for their defence: they assembled in their chapel, and in solemn prayer besought Him in whom they trusted to be their shield in the hour of danger. The ruffian band, hitherto breathing nothing but destruction and slaughter, were astonished at this novel sight: where they expected armed hands, they saw them clasped in prayer, and the whole body of men bending before the Prince of Peace. They heard the prayer for protection, the request for mercy to be extended to their murderers, and the song of praise and confidence in the sure promise of the Lord. They beheld all in silence; they were unable to raise a hand against them; and, after having for a night and a day lingered about, they marched away without having injured a single individual, or stolen a loaf of bread. This singular mark of the protection of heaven induced the inhabitants of the neighbourhood to bring their goods and ask for the protection of these Christians.[d]

## *PSALM THE EIGHTY-FIRST.*

1—3. (1) **joyful noise**, a term used of the blare of trumpets.[a] (2) **take a psalm**, or take *music.* **timbrel**, Ex. xv. 20. **harp**, Ge. iv. 21. **psaltery**, 1 Sa. x. 5. (3) **trumpet**, Heb. *shophar.*[b] **new moon**, any new moon festival, or the special festival of the seventh month. **in the time appointed**, trans. *at the full moon*, wh. would denote the feast of tabernacles.

*They durst not sing* (**v. 1**).—Did you ever think of giving God

thanks that you can sing His praise aloud without fear of being overheard? I heard a letter read, some time since, from an English gentleman, now in one of the Roman Catholic towns of Italy, where the Bible is not allowed to be read, and where the few poor Italians, who wish to worship God according to His Word, must do so in secret; for if discovered, they would be sent to prison. The gentleman wished to join them one Sabbath morning. A man who had promised to take him, led him a long way through back streets; and at last, after looking round to see that no one was watching them, opened a door, and they went into a low room, where the little meeting was held. The prayers and addresses were very earnest, and they joined together in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. But they durst not sing, for fear of the sound being heard. How sad and solemn that silence must have been! When you are singing your psalms or hymns all together, loudly and joyfully, think of these poor Italians, and pray for them.c—*Motives to thankfulness.*—For all the blessings which Almighty God in His mercy bestows upon us, He expects and requires to be thanked. He bestows them for the promotion of His glory, and He would have us give glory to Him. In the volume of His book are noted both the mercies which we receive, and the manner in which we receive them. Let us receive all His mercies, especially let us receive His greatest, His spiritual mercies, with thankful and obedient hearts; lest, notwithstanding the promise of the forgiveness of sins, our iniquities be at last visited upon our heads; and that be realised upon us which was pronounced in righteous judgment upon the family of the aged Eli, "Wherefore the Lord God of Israel saith, I said indeed that thy house, and the house of thy father, should walk before Me for ever: but now the Lord saith, Be it far from Me; for them that honour Me I will honour, and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed."d

**4—7.** (4) **statute**, appointed Mosaic ordinance.a (5) **testimony**, or witness to Himself, and His claim to the obedience of the people. **through**, more correctly, *against*.b **heard**, *etc.*, "there I heard for the first time the voice of God, wh. I knew not, speaking on Sinai."c Reference may, however, be to the strange language of the Egypt. taskmasters. (6) **pots**, baskets.d (7) **secret . . thunder**, dark thunder-clouds, fr. behind wh. God spoke to the Israelites. **Meribah**, Ex. xvii. 6, 7.

*The reduced tradesman.*—Let us step into this large house, and with this well-to-do family; let us step in and converse for a little time. Ah! it is our poor old friend, whose only daughter has just left him—and, "How are you to-day?" "Well, sir, I am wonderful. Two or three years ago, when the large firm of Watkins and Waller broke, and I lost nearly the whole of my fortune, I was amazed at myself; why, sir, I bore up, and I really felt more angry with them than vexed at my own loss, though that was bad enough. But when my poor Jessie died—poor girl! and she was such a sunny creature—so full of joy and brightness, and now she is gone." Tears started in the old man's eyes. "I can't help it, you see, sir." "Don't try to help it, my old friend," I said, "but tell me all about it." "Why, sir, sometimes I think it's wonderful—I see her a little bonny child—and I think of the days when I used to come home tired from the office, and how bright she made our winter fireside. Two years ago, sir, when I

b "These instruments are commonly made of cows' or rams' horns; they differ somewhat in shape, some being much more curved than others, and the tube of some not being round but flattened. Engel mentions one in the great Synagogue of London, wh. has this *n.* of the Ps. inscribed on it."—*Peroune. vv.* 1, 2. *Bp. Sherlock*, i. 345.

c *Fam. Treas.*

"We, ignorant of ourselves, beg often our own harms, which the wise powers deny us for our good; so find we profit, by losing of our prayers."—*Shakespeare.*

d *Bp. Mant.*

a Le. xxiii. 24; Nu. x. 10.

b "Once Joseph had gone forth with the title, 'Saviour of the Age' (*Tsophnath-Paneah*), over their land to benefit them. Afterwards they forgot their benefactor, and oppressed his children; then Joseph's God arose, and *went forth* over the land in righteous judgment, yet still as Saviour of that people, in whom dwelt the germ of blessing for all nations."—*Kay.*

c *Huppfeld.*

d In wh. Egypt. bricklayers bore the clay for bricks."—*Spk. Com.*

lost that money, I thought, if I should have lost her too, it would have driven me mad; but no, sir, I am really very happy when I think of her, and feel that somehow I am going from strength to strength."[e]

8—12. (8) wilt hearken, comp. our Lord's expression, "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear." (9) no strange god, the fundamental requirement of Jehovah's covenant.[a] (10) open, *etc.*, Ps. xxxvii. 4; Eph. iii. 20. (11) would, or *desired*. (12) gave them up, Ac. xiv. 16. The greatest and most fearful of God's punishments.

*Divine expostulation* (*vv.* 8—10).—We have here—I. A compassionate Father calling to His child, "O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me." II. A jealous Sovereign laying down the law, "There shall no strange god be in thee." III. An all-sufficient Friend challenging confidence, "I am the Lord thy God: open thy mouth wide, and I will fill it."[b]

*Note on v.* 10.—"My friend, you tell me you are in great distress: take my advice: go to the king, and open your mouth wide." "I went to the great man and opened my mouth, but he has not given me anything." "I opened my mouth to him, and have gained all I wanted." "Why open your mouth there? it will be all in vain." Does a person not wish to be troubled, he says to the applicant, "Do not say Ah, ah! here;" which means, do not open your mouth, because that word cannot be pronounced without opening the mouth.[c]—*A praying soldier.*—During the rebellion in Ireland, a private soldier, in the army of Lord Cornwallis, was daily observed to be absent from his quarters and from the company of his fellow-soldiers: he was therefore suspected of holding intercourse with the rebels; and on this suspicion, probably increased by the malice of his wicked comrades, he was tried by a court-martial, and condemned to die. The marquis, hearing of the case, wished to examine the minutes of the trial; and not being satisfied, sent for the man to converse with him. Upon being interrogated, the prisoner solemnly disavowed every treasonable practice or intention, declared his sincere attachment to his sovereign, and his readiness to live and die in his service. He affirmed that the real cause of his absence was, that he might obtain a place of retirement for the purpose of private prayer, for which his lordship knew that he had no opportunity among his profane comrades, who had become his enemies merely on account of his profession of religion. He said he had made this defence on the trial, but the officers thought it so improbable that they paid no attention to it. The marquis, in order to satisfy himself of the truth of his defence, observed that if so, he must have acquired some considerable aptness in this exercise. The poor man replied, that as to ability he had nothing to boast of. The marquis then insisted on his kneeling down and praying aloud before him; which he did, and poured forth his soul before God with such copiousness, fluency, and ardour, that the marquis took him by the hand, and said he was satisfied that no man could pray in that manner who did not live in the habit of intercourse with his God. He then not only revoked the sentence, but received him into his peculiar favour, and placed him among his personal attendants, in the way to promotion.

13—16. (13) oh that, or, how I wish that. (14) soon, in a

[e] *E. Paxton Hood.*

[a] "In this *v.* the key-note of the revelation of the law fr. Sinai is struck; the fundamental command wh. opens the Decalogue demanded fidelity to Jehovah, and forbade idol-worship as the sin of sins."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 10. *T. Boston*, ix. 482; *B. Beddome*, ii. 15.

*v.* 12. *Dr. H. Smith*, 72.

[b] *R. Cecil, M.A.*

[c] *Roberts.*

"There is something in the very act of prayer that for a time stifles the violence of passion, and elevates and purifies the affections. When affliction presses hard, and the weakness of human nature looks around in vain for support, how natural is the impulse that throws us on our knees before Him who has laid his chastening hand upon us, and how encouraging the hope that accompanies our supplications for His pity. We believe that He who made us cannot be unmoved by the sufferings of His children; and in sincerely asking His compassion, we almost feel that we receive it."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

very little while. (15) submitted, marg. *yielded feigned obedience.* (16) fed, *etc.*, comp. De. xxxii. 13, 14.[a]

*God giving up obstinate transgressors* (*v.* 13).—I. The perverseness complained of. 1. Nothing could exceed the kindness of God towards His people of old; 2. But their obstinacy was incorrigible. Should we imitate the perverseness of the Jews, let us tremble for fear of—II. The judgment inflicted on account of it. 1. What a loss they sustained; 2. What misery they incurred. Hence it appears—(1) Whose will be the fault if any be lost. (2) Whose will be the glory if any be saved.[b]

*Bees* (*v.* 16).—Mr. Tristram states that the hive-bee of Palestine much resembles our own *Apis mellifica*, and still more closely the hive-bee of Italy and Southern Europe, named *Apis ligustica*, but is smaller and of a lighter colour. The swarms or colonies are also generally more numerous, and the cells of the combs a little smaller, while the combs are frequently of great size and weight. It is, he adds, the *Apis fasciata* of Latreille, and now, as of old, is quite as abundant in a wild state as reclaimed. The same species of wild bees are far more numerous than their hived relatives, and the greater quantity of the honey sold in the south of Palestine is obtained from wild swarms. The abundance of bees in the olden time is attested by the repeated description of the land of promise as "a land flowing with milk and honey." The observant author quoted says: "Few countries are more admirably adapted for bees than this, with its dry climate, and its stunted but varied flora, consisting, in large proportion, of aromatic thymes, mints, and other labiate plants, as well as of crocuses in spring; while the dry recesses of the limestone rocks everywhere afford shelter and protection for the combs." Hence the allusion to "honey out of the rock." Wild honey is also found in trees; thus, "when the people were come into the wood, behold the honey dropped" (1 Sam. xiv. 25, 26). Bees are more abundant in the wilderness of Judæa than in any other part of Palestine; hence honey was a principal part of the plain fare of John the Baptist in the desert. In the same region the Bedouins of the present day squeeze the honey from the combs, and store it up in skins and jars. There are various species of humble bee in Palestine; and mason bees are also common.

a Ex. xvi. 19.

b *C. Simeon, M.A.* "Even bees, the little alms-men of spring bowers, know there is richest juice in poison-flowers." —*Keats.* When the old Romans attacked a city, it was sometimes their custom to set up a white flag at the city gate. If the garrison surrendered while the white flag was up, their lives were spared: after that, the black flag was run up, and every man was put to the sword. Sinner, to-day the white flag of mercy is out. Surrender to Christ, and live, before the black flag of death and doom takes its place.

## *PSALM THE EIGHTY-SECOND.*

author and date,—unknown

*A Psalm of judgment on corrupt magistrates.*

Poss. historical connection, 2 Chro. xv. 8—19, xix. 4—11.

**1—4.** (1) standeth, is stationed. among the gods, *Elohim*, a term sometimes used for those high in office.[a] (2) accept the persons, common expression for undue partiality.[b] (3) defend, Heb. *judge:* do justice to: give them their due. (4) rid, same idea as *deliver*, Pr. xxiv. 11, 12.

*The importance of mercy.*—Mercy is in the air which we breathe, the daily light which shines upon us, the gracious rain of God's inheritance. It is the public spring for all the thirsty, the common hospital for all the needy. All the streets of the Church are paved with these stones. What would become of the children if there were not these breasts of consolation? It is mercy that takes us out of the womb, feeds us in the days of our pilgrimage, furnishes us with spiritual provision, closes our eyes in peace, and translates us to a secure resting-place. It is the first petitioner's

a Ex. xxi. 6, xxii. 8, xxii. 28. b Ex. xxiii. 2; Le. xix. 15; De. i. 17; Ja. ii. 1. "It seems preferable to regard this passage, to

*v.* 6, as a rebuke addressed, in the true prophetic strain, by the poet himself, to those whose iniquity called for the protest."—*Perowne.*

*v.* 1. *Bp. Andrewes,* v. 203; *J. Alting,* Op. ii. pars. 3, 190.

*a* Ps. xiv. 4, liii. 4.

*b* "A figurative expression for the disturbance of those fundamental principles on which the administration of justice rests."—*Spk. Com.* "Upon three things the duration of the world depends — upon truth, and justice, and peace."—*Rabban Simeon.*

*c* Children of the Most High, Jno. x. 34—36.

*d* "All nations are Thine inheritance. Thou gavest a special inheritance to Israel; but *all* lands are Thy Canaan, and all will be judged by Thee." — *Wordsworth.*

*v.* 5. *J. Boys,* 965.

*v.* 6. *R. Michell, Bamp. Lec.* 1.

*vv.* 6, 7. *H. Smith,* 290; *Dr. J. Edwards,* 29.

*vv.* 6—8. *T. Gataker,* ii. 71.

*e Dr. D. Thomas.*

*f Dr. Tholuck.*

"Prayer is to the penitent heart a sweet source of consolation, long even before the answer come; because a generous mind rejoices in acknowledging the obligation, and the first believer's article, the contemplation of Enoch, the confidence of Abraham, the burden of the prophetic songs, and the glory of all the Apostles, the plea of the penitent, the ecstasies of the reconciled, the believer's hosanna, the angel's hallelujah. Ordinances, oracles, altars, pulpits, the gates of the grave, and the gates of heaven, do all depend upon mercy. It is the loadstar of the wandering, the ransom of the captive, the antidote of the tempted, the prophet of the living, and the effectual comfort of the dying: there would not be one regenerate saint upon earth, nor one glorified saint in heaven, if it were not for mercy.

5—8. (5) **know not,** "moral blindness is the cause of all sin," it is also the effect of sin.[a] **walk . . darkness,** Pr. ii. 13. **foundations,** *etc.*, Ps. xi. 3.[b] (6) **ye are gods,** Elohim,[c] *v.* 1, representatives of God. (7) **die,** they had no ground for presumption; their dignity was but one of office, not one of nature. **like men,** *lit.* like Adam, "when he violated the conditions on which he held his life." **princes,** poss. a special example is referred to: *see* Ps. lxxxiii. 11. (8) **for . . nations,** *lit.* "Thou hast all the nations as Thine inheritance."[d]

*The world wrong in its foundations* (*vv.* 5—8).—Referring to kings, etc., the Psalm brings under our attention—1. The lofty position they occupy; 2. The presence of God in their midst; 3. The cardinal rule of their office. I. The radical wrongness of the word. 1. Look at the foundation of man's character individually; 2. Religiously. II. The ephemeral distinctions of the world. 1. The most illustrious must meet with a common event; 2. They must meet this common end in a way peculiar to themselves. III. The true hope of the world. 1. This cry is one of the deepest cries of universal man; 2. It implies the want of confidence in all creature instrumentality; 3. And a confidence in the possibility of securing the Divine interposition.[e]

*Children of God* (*v.* 6).—As children trust, without suspicion, their superiors who speak to them, so do we, whom the Son of God has purchased with His precious blood, have like faith in our Lord. Woe to him who sows distrust in the soul of a child towards the word of its mother. Cursed also be he who plants a doubt of our Lord in our souls. We hang on Him with a true thirsting eye; let other masters, if they choose, give their disciples stones for bread, a serpent for fish, a scorpion for an egg; the word of our Lord is always the bread of life—whether I understand it or not. If I understand it, then it nourisheth me. If I understand it not, then there is something stored up for me in the future; at any rate, this I am certain of, from the mouth of my Lord no other word has ever flowed but the word of life. He who has attained to this child-like faith in his Lord, is like one who has run in from a wide sea into a safe haven.[f]—*Death of Washington.*—A neglected cold had caused the death of Washington, on the 14th of December, 1799, after little more than a day's illness. He expired, in the sixty-eighth year of his age, in his beloved house at Mount Vernon, surrounded by that quiet and that domestic affection which he coveted above all things, and which came as a sacred solace and conclusion to a life of turmoil, danger, and contest. It may be said of him, as of many other great men, that his work was finished before he himself departed. Had he lived longer, he would perhaps have added

nothing to his fame. He had helped to free his nation ; he had lived to organise the political constitution of his country ; had added eight years of wise administration to eight of sterner service, and to a long career of preparation for the one great task. It would be difficult to imagine how anything more could have been placed upon the record, worthy of that which had already been accomplished. With men of special greatness, death is the completion and consecration of the full magnificence of their lives ; and such, it may be said, was the case with Washington. The popular grief at his loss was universal and profound. It did not even cease with America, but was reflected from the greatest natures in other countries also. When the fact became known in France, Napoleon Bonaparte, then first consul, issued to the army, on the 9th of February, 1800, the following order of the day :—"Washington is dead! This great man fought against tyranny ; he established the liberties of his country. His memory will always be dear to the French people, as it will be to all free men of the two worlds : and especially to French soldiers, who, like him and the American soldiers, have combated for liberty and equality." It was directed that black crape should be suspended from all the standards and flags throughout the French Republic for ten days. Splendid military ceremonies took place in the Champ de Mars, and a funeral oration was pronounced in the Hôtel des Invalides, at which the civil and military authorities of the capital were present. But a yet grander testimony, because of the generous sentiment it embodied, was rendered by the power with which Washington had so long been at war. A British fleet lying at Torbay lowered its flags half-mast on receipt of the intelligence. The bitter contest was now at an end, and it was not for England to refuse her recognition of that lofty spirit which had conducted America to independence.[g]

tions it desires to receive, or has received, or the faults, errors, and offences which it has committed; and a candid mind delights in holy unburdenings, and an humble mind in the confession of its own incapacity for doing good, all which sentiments accompany penitential prayer. And, also, that the exercise itself is a drawing nigh unto One who giveth liberally and upbraideth not. God has no frowns for the penitent: He hears their cry, and will help them."—*Rev. J. S. Knox.*

*g Cassell's Hist. of U. States.*

## *PSALM THE EIGHTY-THIRD.*

author,—poss. Jahaziel, 2 Chro. xx. 14—17

*A Psalm against a confederacy of hostile nations.*

**1—4.** (1) **keep**, *etc.*, lit. *let there not be silence to Thee ;* or, *stillness*, as if indifferent to surrounding conditions. (2) **lifted up the heads**,[a] Jer. viii. 28. (3) **crafty**, *lit.* make crafty their plot or secret consultation. **hidden ones**, Israel regarded as set apart and guarded as a peculiar treasure.[b] (4) **cut . . nation**, 2 Chro. xx. 11.[c]

*God's hidden ones* (*v.* 3).—I. The people of God are hidden in His heart—in the depths of everlasting love. II. In the hollow of His hand—as the objects of His special care. III. In the laboratory of His spirit, where they are created anew in Jesus Christ. IV. They are hidden as leaven—in the character and extent of their influence.[d]

*Duty to enemies.*—A soldier, riding over the scene of a battle-field when the fight was done, came, as he picked his steps among the dead, to a body, which, stirring, showed some signs of life. The bleeding form wore the dress of a foe. Regardless of that, he said to his attendant, "Give him a draught of wine ;" and, as the officer stooped down to do so, the wounded soldier, discovering through the mist that was gathering on his dying eye, in this good Samaritan, the general of the troops against

*a* Job v. 12.
*b* Ps. xxvii. 5, xxxi. 20.
*c* Is. vii. 8 ; Je. xlviii. 2.
*See W. Cradock, Divine Drops*, 79.
*d Dr. Waddington.*
"Like as if one had a great enemy, and the queen, who is but a mortal woman, should promise to protect and defend him, he would not fear; much more we

ought not to fear our enemies, seeing that God, who only is almighty, doth say, 'Fear not; for I am thy Protector and thy Defence!'"—*Cawdray.*

"I would not enter on my list of friends (though graced with polish'd manners and fine sense, yet wanting sensibility) the man who needlessly sets foots upon a worm. An inadvertent step may crush the snail that crawls at evening in the public path; but he that has humanity, forwarn'd, will tread aside and let the reptile live."—*Cowper.*

whom he had been fighting, raised himself on his elbow, drew a pistol, and, with deadly hate, fired it at his benefactor's head. Happily, the bullet missed its mark; and the general, as soon as he recovered from his surprise, with a forgiveness truly magnanimous, said, "Give it to him all the same!"—*The Jesuit dogma of probabilism.*—This a device which enables a man to commit any act, be it ever so manifest a breach of the moral and Divine law, without the least restraint of conscience, remorse of mind, or guilt before God. What is probabilism? By way of answer we shall suppose that a man has a great mind to do a certain act, of the lawfulness of which he is in doubt. He finds that there are two opinions upon the point; the one *probably* true, to the effect that the act is lawful; the other *more probably* true, to the effect that the act is sinful. Under the Jesuit regimen the man is at liberty to act upon the *probable* opinion. The act is probably right, but more probably wrong, nevertheless he is safe in doing it, in virtue of the doctrine of probabilism. It is important to ask, what makes an opinion probable? To make an opinion probable a Jesuit finds easy indeed. If a single doctor has pronounced in its favour, though a score of doctors may have condemned it, or if the man can imagine in his own mind something like a tolerable reason for doing the act, the opinion that it is lawful becomes probable. It will be hard to name an act for which a Jesuit authority may not be produced, and harder still to find a man whose invention is so poor as not to furnish him with what he deems a good reason for doing what he is inclined to, and therefore it may be pronounced impossible to instance a deed, however manifestly opposed to the light of nature and the law of God, which may not be committed under the shield of the monstrous dogma of probabilism.

5—8. (5) one consent, *or heart.*[a] (6) Edom, Ge. xxv. 30. Moab, Ge. xix. 37. Hagarenes, dwelling in the land from east of Gilead to the Persian Gulf.[b] (7) Gebal, mountainous region S. of the Dead Sea, in the neighbourhood of Petra. Ammon, Ge. xix. 38. Amalek, Ex. xvii. 8. Philistines, Ge. x. 14. Tyre, Jos. xix. 29. (8) Asshur, Ge. x. 11.

*Facing crafty enemies.*—Snakes are some of the most dangerous foes that Europeans have to cope with in the tropics. A traveller of the name of Baillie one morning startled his companions by the dreadful cry of "A snake! a snake! look!" They all stared at him as he was lying in his hammock, and, to their astonishment, beheld a monstrous serpent twisted round the rope which supported his hammock, with its head at some distance, darting out its forked tongue, and examining him as he lay stretched below. "Lie still," cried the fiscal; "he won't hurt you;" and, calling in two or three of the natives, he pointed it out to them. One of these men advancing towards it, caught its eye with his own; the animal now appeared to move its whole body with fear or pleasure. The native stepped backwards without turning the sight of his eye from the fierce orbit of his enemy; and as he kept backing, the snake, with its head steadily advancing, gradually uncoiled his body from the rope round which it was twined. At length its whole body, trailing on the ground, moved slowly along after this coloured man—eye fixed upon eye—until a youth, making a dash from behind a bush, in an

[a] "Heb. *lēb*, here referring prob. not to the hearty earnestness, or the unanimity, of the counsel, but to the intelligence and thought with wh. it was devised."—*Jennings and Love.*

[b] 1 Chro. v. 10, 18—22.

"Couldst thou not grant the merciful a time for mercy? Time is a man's good angel: to leave no interval between the sentence and the fulfilment of it, doth beseem God only,—the Immutable!"—*Coleridge.*

instant flattened the head of this dangerous monster with one blow of his club; and although the body still undulated, like the waves of the sea, it was now perfectly harmless. So let the Christian face his enemy in the courage of faith and the strength of Christ, and he shall be slain before him, and become equally harmless.[c]

9—12. (9) **Midianites**, Ge. xxxvii. 28. **Sisera**, Ju. iv. 22. **Jabin**, Ju. iv. 23. **Kison**, Ju. v. 21; 1 Ki. xviii. 40. (10) **En-dor**, Jos. xvii. 11. (11) **Oreb . . Zeeb**, princes of the army, Ju. vii. 25. **Zebah**, *etc.*, these seem to have been the kings, Ju. viii. 5, 6. (12) **houses**, *lit.* pastures or homesteads.

*Enmity to God in man.*—This may be shown—1. From man's capability of knowing God, and his indifference to possess this knowledge. 2. Wilful ignorance of God. 3. So seldom thinking of God. 4. So little concerned about the favour of God. 5. So little converse and walk with God. 6. The thoughtlessness concerning God which man manifests in all his daily ordinary affairs. 7. The uncomfortable life which he lives by reason of his distance from God and unacquaintedness with Him. 8. His universal disobedience of the Divine laws.[a]—*Evils of enmity to God.*—Is not aversion to delight in God a manifest contrariety to the order of things—a turning all upside down—a shattering and breaking asunder the bond between rational appetite and the First Good—a disjointing and unhinging of the best and noblest part of God's creation from its station and rest, its proper basis and centre? How fearful a rupture doth it make! how violent and destructive a dislocation! If you could break in pieces the orderly contexture of the whole universe within itself, reduce the frame of nature to utmost confusion, rout all the ranks and orders of creatures, tear asunder the heavens, and dissolve the compacted body of the earth, mingle heaven and earth together, and resolve the world into a mere heap—you had not done so great a spoil as in breaking the primary and supreme tie and bond between the creature and his Maker.[b]

13—18. (13) **like a wheel**, or *rolling thing.*[a] As the chaff, dust, sand, anything driven in rolling masses by the wind.[b] **stubble**, Ps. i. 4. (14) **as the fire**, *etc.*, fig. fr. rapid burning of brushwood on a hill side; comp. prairie fires. (15) **persecute**, better *visit* them, punish them. (16) **seek thy name**, even such judgments being conceived as restorative. (17) **for ever**, or thoroughly. (18) **thou**, *etc.*,[c] see the prayer of Jehoshaphat, 2 Chro. xx. 6.

*The best use of enemies.*—A gentleman calling on Archbishop Tillotson, observed in his library one shelf of books, of various forms and sizes, all richly bound, finely gilt and lettered. He inquired what favourite authors those were that had been so remarkably distinguished by his grace. "These," said the archbishop, "are my own personal friends; and, what is more, I have made them such (for they were avowedly my enemies) by the use I have made of those hints which their malice had suggested to me. From these I have received more profit than from the advice of my best and most cordial friends; and therefore you see I have rewarded them accordingly."[d]

*c J. Bates.*

"Prayer ardent opens heaven, lets down a stream of glory on the consecrated hour of man, in audience with the Deity: who worships the great God, that instant joins the first in heaven and sets his foot on hell."—*Young.*

*a J. Howe.*

"Are we gods, allied to no infirmities? Are our natures more than men's natures? When we slip a little out of the way of virtue, are we lost? Is there no medicine called sweet mercy?"—*Beaumont and Fletcher.*

*b J. Howe.*

*a* Comp. Is. xvii. 13.

*b Gesenius.*

*c* "There cannot possibly be more than *One* whose name is *Jehovah*, and so when His Name is mentioned, of necessity He is mentioned, and therefore 'He is His Name, and His Name is He.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*d Percy Anec.*

author,—poss. David

*A Psalm concerning the consolations of Divine worship.*

*Gittith*, see title Ps. viii.

## PSALM THE EIGHTY-FOURTH.

1—4. (1) amiable, a singular adj. to apply to *places*, better. *how* lovely. tabernacles, specially suitable to David's time, when the ark was in tents. The plural form is prob. *poetical*. (2) fainteth, or is consumed with desire. living God, Ps. xlii. 2. (3) sparrow,[a] referred to as familiar to the Psalmist in its association with the sanctuary. thine altars, we need not suppose that these birds built their nests actually in the altars; the poet blends himself with his figure of the birds. (4) dwell,[b] the officials who are always at the tabernacle.

*Divine worship* (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. The amiableness of Divine worship may be discerned. 1. Behold the assembly: 2. Proceed with them in their devotions; 3. Prayer forms another part of their devotions; 4. The ministry of the Word; 5. The results of worship. II. The manner in which worshippers are drawn to the place of worship; longing, etc.; value and prepare for the worship of God.[c]

*Swallows* (*v.* 3).—Hebrew words have been rendered "swallow" in our version—*derôr*, which means "freedom," and *soos* or *sis*. The former, the bird of freedom, is spoken of as building in the temple: "Yea, the swallow hath found a nest for herself" (Ps. lxxxiv. 3). "As the swallow by flying" (Pr. xxvi. 2). The *soos* is mentioned by Jeremiah as observing the time of its coming, and to its note is compared, in Isaiah, Hezekiah's cry of anguish. "The crane and the swallow observe the time of their coming" (Je. viii. 7). "Like a crane or a swallow so did I chatter" (Is. xxxvii. 14). It is agreed by all philologists that our translators interchanged the words, and that in each case it should be "swallow and crane," not "crane and swallow." As to *derôr*, there is no question but that the translation is correct; and the allusions to its flight, and its habit of nesting in the temple, are quite in accordance with the fact. But the rendering of *soos* seemed more questionable. In the first place, though the swallow is a migrant in the Holy Land, yet it is not so to the same degree as in our more northern latitudes. Many swallows remain all the winter by the sea-coast; and in the Jordan valley the swallow is by no means rare throughout the year. Its numbers are largely recruited in spring; but we could scarcely say of it in Palestine, that the swallow observes the time of its coming. Again, no one would seize on the subdued warbling note of the swallow as at all resembling the cry of pain. But the whole difficulty was solved when we found that *soos* is to the present day the vernacular or provincial, though not the classical, Arabic name of the swift, and when we noted that, unlike the swallows, the swifts return to Palestine on a sudden in one day, and cover the land in countless myriads. We were encamped near Carmel when these birds returned; and in the morning when one was shot and brought to our tents, I inquired of the Bedouin boys, who were hanging as usual about the camp, what they called it. "Oh, that is a *soos*," was the reply at once. Here is the explanation at once, in perfect accordance with the Scriptural references. We all know how exactly the harsh scream of the swift—imitated in the very name, *soos*, and most unlike the twittering of the swallow—

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*a Tsippor*, any small bird. *Derôr*, the swallow, so called from its gyrations.

*b* Je. xx. 6.

See *R. Erskine*, x. 230.

*v.* 1. *T. Gregory*, 81.

*vv.* 1, 2. *J. B. Massillon*, xiv. 314; *Dr. J. Rogers*, iv. 191; *A. Munton*, 83; *A. Williams*, ii. 334; *Bp. Mant*, 424; *Bp. Fulford*, ii. 169.

*c Gamma* in 400 Sks.

"When a pump is frequently used, but little pains are necessary to obtain water, it flows out at the first stroke, because the water is high. But if the pump has not been used for a long time, the water gets low, and when it is wanted you must pump a great while, and the stream only comes after great efforts. And so it is with prayer: if we are instant in it, and faithful in it, every little circumstance awakens the disposition to pray, and desires and words are always ready. But if we neglect prayer, it is difficult for us to pray, for the water in the well gets low."—*Felix Neff.*

resembles the shriek of pain. We find here no inaccurate natural history; but the research shows that still the Bible is abreast of the most advanced science.[d]

5—7. (5) **strength**, *etc.*,[a] reference is to those who do love and rejoice in God, though they are not actual officials in His house. **heart .. ways**, *lit.* "ways in their heart." The high roads leading to the city are in their thoughts.[b] (6) **Baca**, a figurative expression. Prob. no particular valley is referred to. All the ancient versions render Baca by *weeping*; but some[c] take it to be the name of a kind of mulberry tree wh. drops, as it were, tears of balm.[d] **rain .. pools**, "the early rain also covereth it with blessings."[e] (7) **strength to strength**, ever renewing strength in spite of the toils of the way.

*Who is the blessed man?* (*v.* 5).—Consider—I. Who this man is that speaks thus. 1. He is a thinking man; 2. A believing man; 3. An obedient man; 4. A devout man. II. His blessedness—he whose strength is in God; not, then, as Samson—he who has spiritual strength. 1. Let the weak learn where his true strength lies; 2. Let all prize the ordinances where this strength may be found.[f]

*Rain-pools in the desert* (*v.* 6).—At one o'clock we turn to the right, and enter *Wady Shellâl* with its black cliffs. The approach of another caravan of ten camels, from Mount Sinai, tells us that this is the highway of the desert. The rocks are getting harder, and basalt appears in several places. Hitherto we had passed through arid hills and plains of sandstone, which do not retain water; but as we advance southwards the primitive rocks begin to show themselves; and as these retain the showers longer than the others, they are better able to nourish at least some shreds of vegetation here and there. Here are some seyâleh trees along the road and in the lower crevices, on which at present we see nothing but thorns; leaf, blossom, and seed are not yet. Here comes our ever-smiling sheikh with some rich prize which he has made his own, and which he means to share with us. It is a jug of cold water, which he has just got from a ravine by the way. It is rather muddy, but the best desert-water we have as yet tasted. It was *mut'r*, he informed us; that is, rain-water, which had been retained in some hollow of the rocks. He wished us also to understand that it was *tayib*, that is, good. We had seen some half a dozen of our men spring away to the left at full speed, and dash into a rock-cleft; and we concluded that their eye had caught sight of some *gazellah*, "leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills" (Song ii. 8). We now saw the object of their pursuit; there was water there. It was not "living water;" it was only a pool filled with the rain; but that was no common boon in such a valley of Baca as this.[g]

8—12. (8) **hear my prayer**, evidently the prayer he offered was for restoration to the city and worship of God. (9) **our shield**, Ps. iii. 3, xxviii. 7, lix. 11.[a] **thine anointed**, show favour to the king whom Thou didst anoint: an express. peculiarly suitable to David. (10) **be a doorkeeper**, *lit.* "lie on the threshold;" occupy the meanest office in God's house.[b] (11) **Lord God**, Jehovah-Elohim. **sun**, only place in wh. God is so called.[c] **grace and glory**, present grace and future glory com-

*d Dr. Tristram.*

*a* "Who makes Thee his strength, and strongly stays himself upon Thee."—*Mat. Henry.*

*b* "They cherish the remembrance of caravan journeys to the national festivals. Every spot of the familiar road, every station at which they have rested, lives in their heart."—*Perowne.*

"Blessed are they whose hearts are full of one thought, that they are drawing nearer to God's house."—*Spk. Com.*

*c Ewald, Delitzsch.*

*d* "The meaning is, Blessed are they who can, by faith and endurance, make the dreary spots of life a source of spiritual joy."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*e Revised Eng. Bible.*

*vv.* 5, 6. *A. Alison*, i. 414.

*v.* 6. *Dr. G. Townsend*, 15.

*v.* 7. *T. Manton*, iv. 1001; *Dr. H. Moore*, 31.

*f R. Cecil, M.A.*

*g Dr. Bonar.*

*a* Comp. Ge. xv. 1.

*b* The Korahites, to whom the Ps. is addressed, were *doorkeepers* in the temple. 1 Chro. xxvi. 13—19.

*c* Comp., however, Ps. xxvii. 1; Is. lx. 19; Mal. iv. 2.

v. 10. *T. Manton*, iv. 877; *Bossuit*, xi. 411; *J. Gilbert*, 179.

v. 11. *Dr. T. Horton*, 151; *D. Wilcox*, iii. 1; *Dr. J. Gill*, i. 104; *Dr. N. Lardner*, x. 214; *W. Jay*, ix. 235.

*d J. Wolfendale.*

*e Hive.*

"As rivers, the nearer they come to the ocean whither they tend, the more they increase their waters, and spread their streams; so will grace flow more freely and fully in its near approaches to the ocean of glory. That is not saving which doth not so."—*Dr. Owen.*

*f J. Arrowsmith* (1647).

prise God's full salvation. (12) **trusteth in thee**, wherever he may be, in Zion, or on pilgrim's road.

*Grace and glory* (*v.* 11).—I. The end of existence—glory. II. The method by which this end is realised—grace. III. The order by which it is realised—grace before glory. IV. The encouragement to strive for this end—the Lord will give grace.[d]—*God a sun and shield.*—I. God is a sun. The sun in nature is the source of life—*e.g.* spring-time; warmth—*e.g.* the growing corn; beauty—*e.g.* flowers; and fruitfulness—*e.g.* bloom and sweetness of autumn fruit. II. God is a shield. Several figs. included. Shield borne on the arm. Testudo, shields placed close together over head to protect army attacking city. Or explain way of shielding king's tent by putting it in the centre, and making circle of soldiers' tents around it. III. fr. life of Ab. to whom God said, "I am thy shield." In the shieldings of God we are safe, in the sunshine of God we may grow in strength and in beauty.[e]

*The fulness of Christ* (*v.* 11).—There is in the sun a fulness of created glory. All the light that had been dispersed throughout the great fabric of the new-born world for the first three days was gathered together on the fourth into that one body. So it pleased the Father that all fulness should dwell in Christ. And the several graces that shined in the patriarchs, fathers, and prophets of old under the law were all to be seen at once in Him. The innocence of Abel, obedience of Abraham, the devotion of Jacob, patience of Job, meekness of Moses, were ingredients in that fulness of grace and truth which was found in Christ. Each of them had the fulness of a star, He the sufficiency of a sun that filled them all, and had a fulness above them all.[f]

## *PSALM THE EIGHTY-FIFTH.*

**1—3.** (1) **favourable**, or well-pleased. Thou **hast dealt** graciously. **thy land**, Canaan being regarded as in a special sense God's. **brought Jacob**, this is naturally applied to the return from Babylon; but it suits recovery from any calamity.[a] (2) **iniquity**, Ps. xxxii. 1. **covered**, the O. T. idea of atonement. (3) **wrath**, comp. 2 Chr. xii. 7. **turned**, *etc.*, marg. "turned thine anger from waxing hot." The captives might well rejoice that the wrath of God had been limited, and so they had not been wholly destroyed.

*The Saviour's great mercy.*—'Tis true I am a mighty sinner, but He is a more mighty Saviour. Have I sinned to the uttermost? He has saved to the utmost. True, I am death, but Christ is life; I am darkness, but Christ is light; I am sin, but Christ is holiness; I am guilt, but Christ is righteousness; I am emptiness and nothingness, but Christ is fulness and sufficiency; I have broken the law, but Christ has fulfilled the law; His life is infinitely able to swallow up my death; His light, my darkness; His holiness, my sin; His righteousness, my guilt; His fulness, my emptiness; on Him, therefore, I'll lean, and live, and hope.[b]

**4—7.** (4) **turn us**, or *turn back to us.*[a] Je. xxxi. 18; Ps. lxxx. 7. (5) **for ever**, continuously. Delivered fr. Bab., the exiles hoped for rest, but instead found increasing distress and anxiety, wh., to them, indicated God's continued anger.[b] **draw**

author,—unknown: date, after the return from captivity

*Prayer to realise the full blessings of restoration.*

*a* Comp. Job xlii. 10; Ps. xiv. 7, lxviii. 18.

See *J. Boys' Wks.* 799.

*v.* 1. *J. Mainwaring*, 103.

*b E. Pearse* (1673).

*a* "This portion of the Ps. implies that the people were in a state of great

out, prolong it; make it spread over. (6) revive us,[c] as a nation, by giving full rest and prosperity; restore the ancient times. (7) mercy, the cry for mercy always recognises that judgment is described.

*Spiritual revival* (*v.* 6).—In discussing this text establish the following proposition: That a spiritual revival will be the object and prayer of every renewed heart under a sense of spiritual decay. Observe the following points: This prayer will not be understood by the world; it is easy to maintain the form of religion; examine the means by which Christians are revived; note the ground on which this revival is urged.[d]

*The Welsh revival.*—"You inquire about the state of the churches in Wales. I have nothing but what is favourable to communicate. We had lately a very comfortable association at Pwllheli. Some thousands attended, more than ever were seen before. And here, at Bala, we have had a very great, powerful, and glorious outpouring of the Spirit on the people in general, especially on the children and young people. Some of the wildest and most inconsiderate young people of both sexes have been awakened. Their convictions have been very clear and powerful, and in some instances so deep as to bring them to the brink of despair. Their consolations have also been equally strong. If the Lord should be graciously pleased to continue the work, as it has prevailed for some weeks past, the devil's kingdom will be in ruins in this neighbourhood. 'Ride on, ride on, thou King of glory!' is the present cry of my soul day and night. I verily believe that the Lord means to give the kingdom of darkness a dreadful shake, for he takes off its pillars. Those that were foremost in the service of Satan and rebellion against God, are now the foremost in seeking salvation through the blood of the Lamb. It is an easy work to preach the Gospel of the kingdom here at this time. Divine truths have their own infinite weight and importance on the minds of the people. Beams of Divine light, together with Divine, irresistible energy, accompany every truth delivered. It is glorious to see how the stoutest hearts are bowed down, and the hardest melted. I would not have been without seeing what I have lately seen, no, not for the world."[e]

8—10. (8) will hear, wait and listen with expectancy; watching unto prayer.[a] for . . saints, Ps. lxxxix. 15—17. to folly, best applied to the *idolatry* which had brought such national calamities. (9) nigh, so ready to be granted as soon as there is readiness to receive. (10) mercy, *etc.*, this passage has been very properly applied to the mission and work of Messiah.[b]

*The words of the Lord* (*v.* 8).—I. The listener. Man's duty and privilege to be a listener to God. II. The speaker. God—He speaks powerfully, decisively, attractively, etc. III. The message. Peace—might have been wrath. IV. The confidence. When God speaks we know what to expect. V. The issue. Not to return again to folly, but to lead a holy life.[c]

*Note on v.* 10.—Dr. Boothroyd, "Righteousness and peace have embraced." In the Hindoo book, called *Iraku-Vangesham*, it is said the "lotus flowers were kissing each other." When the branches of two separate trees meet, in consequence of strong winds, it is said, "they kiss each other." When a young palmirah

distress and weakness, such as is described in Ezra and Nehemiah." — *Spk. Com.*

*b* Ezr. ix. 8, 9; Is. lvii. 15.

*c* Ho. vi. 1, 2; Hab. iii. 2.

*v.* 7. *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 240.

*d R. Cecil, M.A.*

"As meadows parched, brown groves, and withering flowers, imbibe the sparkling dew and genial showers; as chill dark air inhales the morning beam; as thirsty harts enjoy the gelid stream; — thus to man's grateful soul from heaven descend, the mercies of his Father, Lord, and Friend!"— *Sir William Jones.*

*e Charles of Bala* (1791).

*a* Hab. ii. 1.

*b* "The four virtues mentioned here are the cardinal virtues of Christ's kingdom."— *Calvin.*

"On God's part gracious goodness and faithfulness have combined, then on man's equity and peace."— *Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 8. *A. Fuller*, 510; *J. Marriott*, 205; *T. Arnold*, 187.

*v.* 10. *R. Erskine*, ii. 121; *R. Warne-*

*ford*, i. 67; *Dr. T. Chalmers*, ix. 100.

*c Dr. H. Bonar.*

*d Roberts.*

tree which grows near the parent stock begins to move (by the wind), the people say, "Ah! the mother is kissing the daughter." A woman says of the ornaments around her neck, "Yes, these embrace my neck." Has a female put on the nose-ring, it is, it is said, kissing her. The idea, therefore, is truly Oriental, and shows the intimate union of righteousness and peace.[a]

11—13. (11) **truth**, responsive to God's great mercy there shall be man's fruits of good works. **from heaven**, like some approving angel.[a] (12) **yield her increase**, as of old, covenant faithfulness being sealed of God by temporal prosperities.[b] (13) **set . . steps**, *lit.* "shall make His steps a way" for us to walk in.[c] Ps. lxxxix. 14.

*Reconciliation through Christ.*—On one occasion, writes Mr. Casalis, in his *Records of a Twenty-three Years' Residence in Basuto (South Africa)*, one of us was explaining these words of the prophet-king, when a Mosuto asked if God could not have shown mercy to sinners without requiring satisfaction for their offences; to which one of the number gave the following very striking reply:—"Where a mantle is torn, do we say to the two pieces, Join yourselves together again? No, but we get some kind of thread, which serves to sew them together. Adam was at first at peace with his Creator, because he was just and pure like Him who had made him in His image. But afterwards what happened? Satan put sin between Adam and Jehovah; thus war was kindled. Now if Jesus has appeared, and taken away sin, He has taken away the disagreement, and peace returns to its former place. Does not Jesus thus become the thread which unites the pieces of the torn mantle? In Him the justice which says, 'Strike the guilty,' and the love which cries, 'Spare the man,' have kissed each other, like two old enemies when they have become reconciled."

a Is. xlv. 8.

b "This *v.* shows us that the power of fruitfulness was not once for all bestowed on the earth, but that every year it is fertilised by the secret virtue of God, according as He sees fit to testify to us His goodness."—*Calvin.*

c 1 Pe. ii. 21.

"Righteousness goes forth before Him, and makes its footsteps a way."—*Hengstenberg.*

"Righteousness shall go before Him, and attend unto the way of His steps."—*Delitzsch.*

## PSALM THE EIGHTY-SIXTH.

author,—prob. David

*Prayer of a persecuted saint.*

1—5. (1) **bow down**, Ps. xvii. 6: incline Thine ear. **poor and needy**, Ps. xl. 17.[a] (2) **am holy**, *marg.* "one whom Thou favourest;" or "pious."[b] (3) **merciful**, or favourable. **daily**, *lit.* "all day long." (4) **lift . . soul**, Ps. xxv. 1. (5) **ready to forgive**, Joel ii. 13.[c] "It is on the broad ground of God's mercy, and of that mercy as freely bestowed on *all* who seek it, that he rests."

*The soul in danger* (*v.* 2).—The text a very short prayer. It implies—I. That the soul is of great value. It is—1. Distinct from the body; 2. The principal part of man; 3. The spiritual part of man; 4. The rational part of man; 5. The capacious part of man; 6. The immortal part of man. II. It supposes that the soul is in danger. 1. This danger is great; 2. Its loss is the greatest one can sustain. III. It infers that God alone can preserve the soul. 1. We cannot do it ourselves; 2. God has engaged to do it; 3. If we do not pray to God to save our souls, and we lose them, it will be not our misfortune, but sin and condemnation.—*Ready to forgive.*—I. We have not to persuade or argue Him into the mind to forgive: He is ready through what Christ has done. II. He is ready to forgive all sins. III. He is ready

a "This is not the highest ground that can be taken in pressing for an answer to our prayer, but it is a ground which God suffers us to take."—*Perowne.* Ps. xxxv. 10, xxxvii. 14, lxxiv. 21.

b "The Psalmist merely declares that he is one whose habit of life is piety, and as such claims God's protection."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"Here the term simply expresses

to forgive all sinners. IV. He is ready to forgive freely. V. He is ready to forgive now.[d]

*Ready to forgive* (*v.* 5).—An old author mentions a story of Satan's appearing to a dying man, and showing him a large parchment roll, wherein were written on each side the numberless sins of the sick man. There were written his idle words, which made up three-quarters of all he had ever spoken, together with the false words, the unchaste words, the angry words; afterwards came in order his vain and ungodly words; and, lastly, his actions, arranged according to the commandments: whereupon Satan said, "See here thy virtues; see here what thy examination must be." The man answered, "It is true, Satan; but thou hast not set down all; for thou shouldest have added and set down here below, 'The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin;' and this also ought not to have been forgotten, 'That whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life;'" whereupon the devil vanished.

6—10. (6) **supplications**, the Heb. form is a peculiar one, prob. meaning "importunate supplications."[a] (7) **in . . thee**, Ps. xx. 1, l. 15, lxxvii. 2. (8) **among the gods**, Ex. xv. 11.[b] **neither . . works**, comp. De. iii. 24. The mere gods have nothing to show that will bear comparison with Thy works. (9, 10) **all nations**, *etc.*, an anticipation of the conversion of the heathen.[c]

*On prayer* (*v.* 7).—Notice the grounds of true prayer. I. The title that, through grace, we have to the merciful consideration of God; 2. The purpose to walk uprightly; 3. Trust in God for help; 4. That prayer is an habitual exercise; 5. That prayer be earnest and persevering; 6. The past experience of God's mercy; 7. That Christ is interceding for us at the right hand of God.[d]

11—13. **teach**, *etc.*, Ps. xxvii. 11. **unite my heart**, he desires singleness and simplicity of aim to the glory of God.[a] Fix all my affections. (12) **praise**, in order that he may give worthy thanks the Psalmist desires the whole, or united heart. (13) **lowest hell**, "from Sheol beneath:"[b] "the deep abyss;" poetical for exceeding depth of affliction.[c]

*A divided heart* (*v.* 11).—The heart is sometimes divided. I. Between doubt and faith, as to the authority of revealed truth. II. Between a formal and spiritual religion. III. Between the claims of the body and the soul. IV. Between the claims of human friendship and the claims of God.[d]

*A united heart* (*v.* 11).—Many small wax lights, which of themselves burn faintly, when put into one torch or taper, send forth a bright and shining flame; many little bells, which tinkle together to the pleasing of children, when melted and cast into one great bell, do affect the ear with a more solemn and awful sound; and many single threads, which snap asunder with the least touch, when twisted together, make a strong cable, which can withstand the fury and violence of a storm. So it is with the mind, the more it is scattered and divided through multiplicity of objects, the more weak it is; and the more it is fixed on one single object, the more masculine and strong are the operations of it, either for good or evil.[e]

14—17. (14) **proud**, *etc.*, marg. *terrible*, Ps. liv. 3. **set thee, do not act**, as I ever would, with an earnest desire to Thy glory.

the Psalmist's conviction that He is one of God's people, a child of grace."—*Spk. Com.*

c Comp. Ex. xx. 6, xxxiv. 6, 9; Nu. xiv. 18, 19.

*v.* 5. *Dr. D. Whitby*, ii. 207; *Dr. J. Hunt*, i. 241.

*d J. Bate.*

*a Delitzsch.*

*b* Ps. lxxi. 19, lxxvii. 13, lxxxix. 6, xcv. 3.

*c* "The pious Jews believed that God's common relation to all would be ultimately acknowledged by all men. (Ps. xlv. 12—16, xlvii. 9)."—*Fausset.*

*d Bp. Blomfield.*

*a* "That all the various desires, interests, passions, that agitate the human heart, may have no hold upon him, compared with the one thing needful,—'to fear God's name.'"—*Perowne.* Je. xxxii. 39.

*b Revised Eng. Bib.*

*c* "The deep abyss, or the undermost Hades, is the place wherein the departed await the final judgment."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*d J. E. Millson.*

*e W. Spurstowe* (1659).

*a* "Is it not the fact that the

more we recognise in every daily occurrence God's secret inspiration guiding and controlling us, the more will all which to others wears a common every-day aspect, to us prove a sign, and a wondrous work?"—*Tholuck.*
*b* Ps. lxxxiii. 8; Is. xxxi. 3; Da. xi. 34; Lu. i. 54.

(15) **compassion**, *etc.*, Ex. xxxiv. 6. (16) **son . . handmaid**, Ps. cxvi. 16. He pleads that he is a servant of Jehovah from his very birth. (17) **token**, some sign of evident good-will.[a] **holpen**, an older form wh. has passed out of use.[b]

*Tokens for good* (*v.* 17).—I. The thing prayed for, a token for good. This may be—1. Inward, as peace, joy, calmness in the midst of danger and perplexity; 2. Outward, as prosperity, silence of animosity. II. The purpose for which it was asked—1. That His enemies might see how God helped the man whom men despised; 2. That men might learn how God comforts His servants.

## *PSALM THE EIGHTY-SEVENTH.*

**author,—unknown: prob. date, the time of Hezekiah**

*Subj., the flowing of all nations unto Zion.*

**1—3.** (1) **his foundation**, *i.e.* the city and temple wh. He has founded. We may render as if the Psalmist pointed to yonder city, saying, "'Tis His foundation on the holy hills. **mountains**, this the character of the district round Zion.[a] (2) **gates**, put for the whole of Zion.[b] (3) **glorious things**, such as are given in the succeeding verses.

*God's preference of the gates of Zion* (*v.* 2).—I. The proofs of His preference. 1. The special promises He has made to public worship; 2. The special honour He has put upon it; 3. The special protection He has given to it. II. The reasons of His preference. 1. The people; 2. The exercises; 3. The graces; 4. The design. III. The practical improvement of the preference. 1. Since God loves the gates of Zion, let us love them too; 2. Let us enter the gates of Zion for the purpose of meeting Him; 3. Let us labour to give to all the opportunity of entering the gates of Zion, multiply places of worship, support missionaries, ministers and evangelists.[c]

*The gates of Zion* (*v.* 2).—"Truly, I love the gates of Chinna Amma more than the gates of Pun-Amma." "No, no; he does not love the gates of that woman; he will never marry her." "He is angry with my gates; he will not pass them." "Love his gates! ay, for a good reason; he gets plenty of help from them."[d]

**4—7.** (4) **I will**, *i.e.* the Almighty: these words are the words of God. **Rahab**,[a] *haughtiness* or *pride;* so a name poetically given to *Egypt.* **Babylon**, known in David's time as the stronghold of idolatry. **this man**, better, *this one;* this nation; each one of these nations shall come to claim rights of adopted citizenship in Zion.[b] (5) **of Zion**, better, *to Zion.*[c] (6) **count**, or number. **writeth up**, "maketh a census of the Gentile world." (7) **singers**, *etc.*, this represents the Gentiles coming in a procession, with singing and choral dances, to Zion, and saying, "All my fresh springs, *i.e.* sources of life and joy, are in Thee."

*God's spiritual Church* (*v.* 6).—In speaking of this city of our God I shall ask you to come and survey—I. Its foundations. II. God's regard for it. III. Its conquests. IV. Its joyfulness.[d]

*The sources of holy joy* (*v.* 7).—"I have read," says Brooks, "of a company of poor Christians who were banished into some remote part; and one standing by, seeing them pass along, said that it was a very sad condition those people were in, to be thus

*a* "Jerus. was on the ridge, the broadest and most strongly marked ridge of the backbone of the complicated hills wh. extend through the whole country fr. the desert to the plain of Esdraelon."—*Stanley.*
*b* Comp. Ps. cxxii. 2; and for prophecy, Is. lx. 11.
*c* *G. Brooks.*
*d* *Roberts.*

*a* Ps. lxxix. 10; Is. li. 9.
*b* "A stranger who becomes a proselyte is like a little child that is born."—*Hebrew saying.*
*c* "The Ps. represents the Almighty as presenting every convert to the Holy City, and saying, 'This and this, one and all, belong to thee; every one is thy own child.'"—*Spk. Com.* *v.* 5. *S. Charnock,* viii. 561.

hurried from the society of men and made companions with the beasts of the field. 'True,' said another, 'it were a sad condition indeed if they were carried to a place where they should not find their God; but let them be of good cheer, God goes along with them, and will exhibit the comforts of His presence whithersoever they go. God's presence with His people is a spring that never fails.'"

## PSALM THE EIGHTY-EIGHTH.

**author and date,— unknown**

*Mahalath-Leannoth, concerning one sick and afflicted.*

1–5. (1) **my salvation**, the expression of trust, wh. scarcely recurs again in this sad and cheerless Ps. **cried day and night**, *lit.* "day I have cried, night (my plaint is) before Thee."[a] (2) **cry**, here cry of mourning; the term is generally used for a shout of exultation. (3) **full of troubles**, "satiated with evils."[b] **grave**, *sheol*, Ps. xvi. 10. (4) **no strength**, utterly prostrate.[c] (5) **free**, castaway; left alone, with none to care for me, as if I were dead. **cut . . hand**, Job xii. 10, no longer sustained and guided by the Divine hand.

*The God of salvation* (*v.* 1).—I. Of His many titles this is one of the most endearing. II. If God is the source of my salvation, who shall hinder? III. If He saves me, let me serve Him. IV. If He save me, who need despair? V. As the God of my salvation, He has the same purpose of mercy and the same plan for all who come to Him that they may be saved.

6–9. (6) **deeps**, Ps. lxix. 15. (7) **thy wrath**, affliction being properly regarded as Div. chastisement. **all thy waves**, Ps. xlii. 7.[a] (8) **put away**, comp. Job's case.[b] **acquaintance**, better, "familiar friends." **an abomination**, as a leper would become; see case of King Uzziah.[c] **shut up**, either as leper, or by reason of the weakness indicated in *v.* 4. (9) **eye mourneth**, Ps. vi. 7; tears being conceived to injure the eye.

*Waves of sorrow* (*v.* 7).—I. They are many, of various sizes, and succeed each other. II. They often bear others whom we love away from us. III. They carry us away from our creature confidences. IV. They show us what perfect weakness we are. V. But they are God's waves. He made the sea, can bid it arise, and be still; if He will, there may be a storm in the calm of life, or a calm in the tempest. VI. Presently there will be no more sea, and His people will be brought to their desired haven, and land safely like the companions of St. Paul.

*Gratitude* (*v.* 6).—A very poor and aged man, busied in planting and grafting an apple-tree, was rudely interrupted by the interrogation, "Why do you plant trees, who cannot hope to eat the fruit of them?" He raised himself up, and, leaning on his spade, replied, "Some one planted trees before I was born, and I have eaten the fruit; I now plant for others, that the memorial of my gratitude may exist when I am dead and gone."[d]

10–13. (10) **shew . . dead?** This expresses the Psalmist's feeling of the improbability that he could ever be restored fr. such extreme sickness, which was like a living death. (11) **destruction**, *Abaddon*.[a] (12) **land of forgetfulness**, "where the dead have no remembrance, and where they are wholly forgotten."[b] (13) **have I cried**, even in my uttermost troubles.[c] **prevent thee**, as if ready before God awaked.

*v.* 7. *Bp. Sandford*, ii. 193; *W. Romaine*, vi. 233; *H. Vaughan*, 243.

*a C. Clayton, M.A.*

*a* "Expressive of the Psalmist's trouble, gasping, so to speak, for utterance."—*Kay.*

*b* Job x. 15; Ps. cxxiii. 4; La. iii. 15, 30.

*c* "The Heb. word implies utter failure of bodily power. The man is become a mere shadow."—*Spk. Com.*

*a* "Now seeing so horrible a flood prevented not the prophet from lifting up his heart and prayers to God, we may learn by his example to cast the anchor of faith and prayer into heaven in all our shipwrecks."—*Calvin.*

*b* Job xix. 13, 14.

*c* Job xxx. 10, "God always intends His people more comfort from every mercy He gives them than the mercy itself, abstractedly considered, would amount to."—*Gurnall.*

*d R. T. S.*

*a* Job xxvi. 6; Re. ix. 11.

*b Spk. Com.*

*c* "This unwearied 'continuing instant in prayer' is the victory of faith in

the midst of trials which, but for this, would end in despair."—*Perowne.*

vv. 10, 11. *A. G. Spencer*, 254.

*a* "The meaning prob. is that the unhappy sufferer has a constitutional tendency to diseases such as that with wh. he is now so severely afflicted."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b Spk. Com.*

*c* Job vi. 4, ix. 34, xiii. 21, etc.

*d* "The Ps. ends with an energetic expression of its main thought—the immediate vicinity of death. The darkness is thickest at the end, just as it is in the morning before the rising of the sun."—*Hengstenberg.*

*e Lambda* in 400 Sks.

author,—unknown: date, the later period of Jewish monarchy

*Subj., God's promises to Dav., and their apparent failure.*

*a* "The heavens are the type of unchangeableness and perpetuity, as compared with the restless vicissitudes, the ever-shifting shows of earth."—*Perowne.*

v. 3. *T. Boston*, viii. 379; *R. Taylor*, 213.

*a Jennings and Lowe.*

v. 7. *J. Flavel*, vi. 378; *C. Carleton*, 272; *Dr. G. Fothergill*, i. 189.

v. 8. *J. W. Warter*, ii. 1.

*The great wonder-worker* (*vv.* 10—12).—Does God show His wonders to the dead? yes, for they shall not all sleep, but behold the King in His beauty; yes, for the silent lips shall praise Him; yes, for the grave shall hear His voice; yes, for God's faithfulness shall be at last seen notwithstanding the destruction of our dearest hopes; yes, for in the darkness of our sorrow His mercy shall appear.

14—18. (14) **why**, *etc.*, the questioning of all great sufferers, Ps. xlii. 9. **hidest**, *etc.*, Job xiii. 24. (15) **from my youth**, poss. as afflicted with a lifelong malady.[a] **distracted**, "the grammatical form of the word indicates a giving way of the will."[b] (16) **horrors**, term used in Job.[c] (17) **daily**, all the day. (18) **lover**, *etc.*, see *v.* 8. **darkness**, grave is now my only friend.[d]

*Distressing bereavements* (*v.* 18).—I. The connections which impart comfort to life. 1. Lover; 2. Friend; 3. Acquaintance. II. The loss of connections. 1. The writer had lost all and despaired even of life; 2. Friends, etc., lost by desertion and removed; 3. Ordinary bereavements. III. In removals we should trace the agency of God. 1. He has the disposal of all; 2. Wisdom and goodness are displayed in our sufferings. IV. Our improvement is designed by all dispensations. We may improve them—1. By sympathy; 2. Gratitude; 3. Resignation; 4. Preparation.[e]

## *PSALM THE EIGHTY-NINTH.*

1, 2. (1) **mercies**, "sure mercies of David," Is. lv. 3. (2) **built up**, like some stately palace. **very heavens**, *i.e.* conspicuous as sun and moon;[a] *lit.* "as for the heavens Thou wilt establish Thy faithfulness in them."

*The believer's song* (*v.* 1).—I. Its subject—Thy mercies, many, great, varied, repeated—providence, creation, grace. II. Its length—for ever, for His mercies are new every morning, and the year is crowned with them. III. Its purpose—to make known etc., sing them in private, in the family, in the congregation, sing them with the heart, mouth, life. Happy if with my latest breath, etc.

3—5. (3) **chosen**, so Dav. is spoken of, 1 Ki. viii. 16. **have sworn**, 2 Sa. 8—16. (4) **thy seed**, fulfilled in Messiah and His spiritual kingdom. **build up**, establish and confirm. (5) **congregation**, *etc.*, most prob. with reference to the dwellers in heaven.

*The song of the heavens* (*v.* 5).—I. The stars, etc., praise the wonders of creative skill. II. The angels in heaven praise the wonders of wisdom and power. III. The redeemed in heaven praise the wonders of Divine grace in their redemption. IV. And we, too, if saved, shall join in the new song.

6—8. (6) **sons of the mighty**, Ps. xxix. 1: the angels are clearly meant. (7) **assembly of saints**, still the angels, those with Him in the glory of heaven. (8) **faithfulness**, "wh. ever encircles Him, and is as the rainbow, Re. iv. 3, a pledge and token for good unto His faithful ones."[a]

*Worshipping God with fear* (*v.* 7).—All who take part in the worship of God should do so with reverential and filial fear. I.

Those who officiate. 1. Preachers, as they who must give account; 2. Singers, lest they offer solemn praise upon a thoughtless tongue. II. The congregation, lest they offer the sacrifice of fools. III. All, because God is present to search the heart, and to save the soul. IV. Let us fear lest we miss the good that we may now find. God is here to bless and to save each one.

9—13. (9) raging, *etc.*, fig. for invading hosts.[a] (10) Rahab, Ps. lxxxvii. 4.[b] (11) earth, all the earth, not merely the land of Israel. (12) Tabor and Hermon,[c] prob. mentioned poetically instead of the east and the west. (13) mighty arm, whose power Thou canst display on occasion.

*Note on v.* 12.—The north-east part of Lebanon, adjoining to the Holy Land, is in Scripture distinguished by the name of Hermon; and is, by consequence, mentioned as the northern boundary of the country beyond Jordan, and more particularly of the kingdom of Og, or of the half tribe of Manasseh, on the east of that river. But besides this Mount Hermon, in the northern border of the country beyond Jordan, we read of another mountain of the same name, lying within the land of Canaan, on the west of the river Jordan, not far from Mount Tabor. To this mountain the holy Psalmist is thought to refer in these words: "The north and the south Thou hast created them: Tabor and Hermon shall rejoice in Thy name;" and in the following passage: "As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descends upon the mountains of Sion."[d]

14—16. (14) habitation, or foundation;[a] basis; pillars. go . . face, standing ever in Jehovah's presence. (15) joyful sound, blowing of trumpets at the worship of Jehovah.[b] walk, *etc.*, see the priestly blessing.[c] (16) thy name, wh. is the subject of their praise: or "in the possession and faithful guarding of Thy revelation of Thyself."

*Good news and glad tidings.*—I. Why is the Gospel a joyful sound? Because it proclaims—1. Pardon for the guilty: 2. Freedom to the captive; 3. A home for the wanderer. II. How may we know the joyful sound? 1. By reading and study; 2. By feeling and believing. [A person who had no ear for music, knew not one note from another, yet could play the piano most accurately. She would play the most delightful airs unmoved, while persons around were entranced. This illustrates the difference between knowing theoretically and experimentally. She understood the notes, heard a sound, but it was not "joyful."] III. The blessedness of knowing it. 1. Direction. Illustrating a lost traveller, dark night, he hears a sheep bell, etc., is a joyful sound, directs him, etc. 2. Joy. Many sweet notes—pardon, peace, grace, make the sound joyful. 3. Exaltation. Illustrating effects of music, of good news, etc.[d]

17, 18. (17) strength, with prob. reference to the *ark*.[a] our horn, 1 Sa. ii. 1. (18) defence, or shield.[b] Read "our shield belongeth to Jehovah, and our king to the Holy One of Israel."

*The invisible God.*—A certain man went to a dervise and proposed three questions:—"1st. Why do they say that God is omnipresent? I do not see Him in any place; show me where He is. 2ndly. Why is man punished for his crimes, since whatever he does proceeds from God? Man has no free will, for he cannot

"All powerful souls have kindred with each other."—*Coleridge.*

*a* Job xxvi. 12, xxxviii. 10, 11; Ps. civ. 3, lxv. 7. *b* "God's power in ruling the sea would naturally be connected in the Psalmist's mind with the great manifestation of His power in the deliverance fr. Egypt."—*Perowne.*

*c* "When we enter the plain of Esdraelon from Samaria, Hermon appears in all its majesty, shooting up on the distant horizon, behind the gracefully rounded top of Tabor."—*Porter. d Paxton.*

*a* Ps. xcvii. 2. "An equal adminis. of justice, reward to the righteous, and punishment to the wicked, is the basis of God's throne." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Le. xxiii. 24; Nu. x. 1—10, xxiii. 21.

*c* Nu. vi. 24—26.

*d* v. 14. *J. Abernethy*, ii. 180; *T. Boston*, vii. 614; *E. Erskine*, i. 214; *Abr. Booth*, iii. 1. vv. 15—16. *A. Toplady*, iii. 197; *H. McNeile*, 107. v. 16. *Bp. Wordsworth*, ii. 291; *E. Erskine*, i. 118. *d Hive.*

*a* "With reference prob. to His presence over the ark, with wh. the word strength is specially connected." — *Spk. Com.*

Ps. xcvi. 6.

*b* "For compare

son of princes to shields, see Ho. iv. 18.

"History records that in the days of Tiberius it was thought a crime to carry a ring stamped with the image of Augustus into any mean or sordid place, where it might be polluted. How much may those who profess to be a holy people learn even from a heathen!"—*Bowes.*

*a* Ps. xxi. 5.

*b* Ps. lxxx. 17.

*v.* 19. *E. Veale,* 95.

*vv.* 20—23. *Bp. Andrewes,* iv. 76.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*a* "May this refer to claims asserted by Shishak, founded on Solomon's obligations to his predecessors? See *e.g.* 1 Ki. ix. 16." *Spk. Com.*

*b* "The plural 'rivers' is in accordance with poetic usage, and need not be explained of the Euphrates and its separate channels, or the Euphrates and Tigris."—*Perowne.*

*c Rosenmuller.*

*a* He. I. 5. An Indian, when asked what the Lord had done for him, gathered some dry leaves into a circle, and placing a worm in the centre, set them on fire. As the flames drew nearer on every

do anything contrary to the will of God; and if he had power he would do everything for his own good. 3rdly. How can God punish Satan in hell fire, since he is formed of that element? and what impression can fire make on itself?" The dervise took up a large clod of earth and struck him on the head with it. The man went to the cadi and said, "I proposed three questions to a dervise, who flung such a clod of earth at me as has made my head ache." The cadi having sent for the dervise, asked, "Why did you throw a clod of earth at his head instead of answering his questions?" The dervise replied, "The clod of earth was an answer to his speech. He says he has a pain in his head; let him show me the pain and I will make God visible to him. And why does he exhibit a complaint to you against me? Whatever I did was the act of God. I did not strike him without the will of God, and what power do I possess? And as he is compounded of earth, how can he suffer pain from that element?" The man was confounded, and the cadi highly pleased with the dervise's answer.

19—21. (19) **in vision,** *see* 1 Chr. xvii. 3—15. **laid help,** or power to help,[a] **mighty,** term used for Dav. 2 Sa. xvii. 10. **chosen,** 1 Ki. xi. 34. (20) **anointed him,** 1 Sa. xvi. 12, 13. (21) **my hand,**[b] or my protection and blessing.

*The sufficiency of Christ to save* (*v.* 19).—Consider—I. The office committed unto Christ. 1. To make reconciliation for man; 2. To effect their complete salvation. II. His sufficiency to discharge it. 1. His essential perfections; 2. His mediatorial endowments. Address—(1) Those who feel their need of Christ; (2) Those who do not; (3) Those who are discouraged on account of their extreme weakness and sinfulness.[c]

22—25. (22) **exact,** as a severe creditor does.[a] **son of wickedness,** *Heb.* for the wicked man. (23) **beat,** *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. vii. 9. (24) **his horn,** 1 Sa. ii. 1. (25) **sea,** the Mediterranean. **rivers,**[b] the Euphrates. These represent the ideal limits of David's kingdom.

*Note on v.* 25.—The meaning is: he shall reign from the Mediterranean Sea to the Euphrates. This is figuratively expressed thus: his right hand shall extend to the sea, or his left to the Euphrates. A similar expression was used, according to Curtius, by the Scythian ambassadors to Alexander. "If," said they, "the gods had given thee a body as great as thy mind, the whole world would not be able to contain thee; thou wouldst reach with one hand to the east, and with the other to the west."[c]

26—29. (26) **my father,** comp. 2 Sa. vii. 14.[a] (27) **first-born,** and therefore the *heir.* **higher,** *etc.*, De. xxviii. 1. (28) **for evermore,** but this, as all God's promises, was conditional. (29) **days of heaven,** conceived as never ending. All these are to be treated as strong poetical expressions: and they should be regarded as indicating the Div. purpose, wh. may however be hindered by human wilfulness and sin.

*The rock of salvation* (*v.* 26).—To the north of Scotland lies an island called Bressay. It is one of the Shetland Islands, and its shores are very rocky. On the south coast of Bressay is a slate quarry. The workmen had to descend the cliff to it by means of a ladder. One evening, a violent and sudden storm drove the

quarry-men from their work. The ladder was left fastened to the cliff. The night was very dark and stormy. A ship, which was struggling with the waves, was driven close to the island. Her crew beheld with terror the white foam of the breakers, as they dashed against the rocks. They knew that if their ship were stranded they must be wrecked. Still the howling winds drove her forward. The waves dashed over her, filled the cabin with water, and drowned the wife of the captain. The sailors now climbed into the rigging. Poor fellows! their state seemed hopeless. They were at the mercy of the furious wind, and of the raging sea. They gave themselves up for lost. No doubt, in that time of suspense, many prayers and cries for deliverance were uttered. On came the ship, and struck against the shore. The poor seamen felt that death was almost certain. On the summit of the cliff was safety; but how could they reach it, who were helplessly dashed at its foot? But, just as the ship struck near the rock, their terror was changed to joy. Close beside them, on the steep face of the cliff, was a ladder. It seemed as if placed there on purpose for them. In haste they sprang from the rigging, mounted the ladder, and reached the top of the cliff in safety. The vessel went to pieces so quickly, that by the next morning hardly a trace of her was left. What a wonderful escape for the sailors! May we not learn a lesson from the rock and the ladder? The case of the poor sailors is our case. We are all tossed on a stormy sea, and are in danger of perishing. We have all need to cry, "Lord, save, or we perish." And how has God provided for our escape? By means of a rock; even the Rock of Ages, Christ Jesus. If we can once reach that rock we are safe. Christ is a sure foundation; in Him is strength, in Him is perfect safety. But how shall we reach the rock? By means of a ladder. That ladder is faith in Christ. It will enable us to reach the rock, and once there we are saved. The conduct of the sailors is full of instruction to us. They did not hesitate. If they had not at once sprung from the rigging to the ladder, they would have perished in the wild waves.

side, and were about to consume the worm, he lifted it out, and placing it safely on a rock, looked up and said, "This is what Jesus did for me."

A drowning man plucked from the jaws of death is happier with three feet of bare rock than others with thousands of broad acres; so is the humble Christian happier with the hope of heaven than the men of the world are when their corn and wine do most abound, and all things go well with them.

If you are not in a state of salvation now, I do not see on what ground you can expect it hereafter.

30—33. (30) **if**, *etc.*, here are introduced the *conditions* on wh. God's gracious promises rest. (31) **break**, *Heb.* more forcibly, *profane*. (32) **rod**, of chastisement, 2 Sa. vii. 14. (33) **not utterly take**, the retention of God's loving-kindness ensures that affliction shall not lose its character of chastisement.[a] **to fail**, Heb. *to lie*.

*God's displeasure at His people's sins* (*vv.* 30—33).—I. The conduct described is—1. Far from being uncommon: 2. Exceedingly heinous; 3. Very ungrateful; 4. Highly inconsistent; 5. Truly lamentable. II. The punishment threatened. 1. It will be most righteous; 2. Absolutely certain; 3. Characterised by great diversity. III. The mercy proclaimed. 1. This, for two reasons. (1) His regard for the Son of His love; (2) And for the word of His truth.

[a] He. xii. 5—8.

A true saint hates the will of the flesh as much as the lusts of the flesh; no less the carnal mind than the corrupt body.

"The broad seal of our sanctification must witness to the privy seal of our adoption."—*Burkitt.*

34—37. (34) **break**, profane, as *v.* 31.[a] (35) **once**, in the sense of *once for all*. **by my holiness**, comp. Ps. lx. 6. **that I will not**, better, surely I will not. (36) **for ever**, God's covenant promises are without limitation,[b] they would go on blessing for ever but for the limitations put on them by man's wilfulness and sin. **the sun**, comp. Ps. lxxii. 5, 7, 17. (37)

[a] Mal. iii. 6; Ja. i. 17.

[b] Je. xxxiii. 20, 21.

[c] "The moon is more for certain

seasons than any other orb. In all countries she has been the arbiter of festivals."—*Perowne. Delitzsch* trans. "And the witness in the sky is faithful." And comp. Job xvi. 19.

*d J. W. Kidd.*

*e J. Dell* (1646).

"Christ left His mother with John, but His saints with His Spirit, to tutor and keep them, that they should not lose themselves in their journey to heaven."—*A Divine of the 17th Century.*

*a* To make void a law is to check its operation. See La. ii. 7.

*b* "His crown was profaned when he was reduced to vassalage. See 2 Chron. xii. 8."—*Spk. Com.*

"Our soul is in our body, as the bird is in the shell, which soon breaks, and the bird flies out: the shell of the body breaking, the soul flies into eternity."—*T. Watson.*

*c G. Hicks* (1645).

*a* "The expression is peculiar; it implies that the king had contracted defilement, been subjected to treatment which degraded him, an account true of Jeconiah, but not less so of Rehoboam."—*Spk. Com.*

faithful witness, evidently the moon.[c] Luther and others have supposed the rainbow to be meant.

*The moon symbolising the Church* (*v.* 37).—I. It will be my chief endeavour to sketch the character of the Church of God under the Gospel, by cautiously tracing certain points of analogy between her and the moon in our solar system. 1. The moon was ordained to rule by night; 2. She has no light of her own; 3. She has no heat of her own. II. Close this discourse with a remark of a personal character. We infer the necessity of an outward witness for Christ, to satisfy the candid inquirer, and to silence a gainsaying world.[d]

*The victory of Christ.*—Christ dwelling in our hearts by faith, as He discovers, reproves, condemns, and destroys sin, so He is called Judgment: and thus is judgment to be understood in the Gospel sense; and not terribly, as in the sense of the law. And this judgment shall at last "break forth unto victory;" that is, though Christ in us hath to do with many strong corruptions and lusts in the soul, yet at last He prevails against them all; and judgment "breaks forth unto victory," because Christ, the Judgment of God in the soul, must needs, in the end, prevail against every sin in man.[e]

38—41. (38) thou, even Thou the faithful God. cast off, *etc.*, the promises and the actual condition of the nation were in striking contrast. (39) made void,[a] rendered the promises of the covenant inoperative: acted as if there were no covenant-terms. his crown, there is evidently intended a personal reference to some king.[b] (40) broken, *etc.*, as Ps. lxxx. 12. strongholds, *etc.*, comp. case of Shishak, 2 Chron. xii. 3, 4. (41) all . . spoil, Ps. lxxx. 12.

*Escape from Divine anger.*—They that know the power of God's wrath, and fear His displeasure more than hell, dare not stand off or keep a distance from Him; no, not for a moment. They have no "rest in their bones," till they have found Him whom their soul loveth. The way to evade God's stroke is not to flee from Him, but to get within Him. He hath long hands which can reach to the bottom of hell, to the foundations of the mountains, to the uttermost parts of the sea. Then we are only out of danger of His smiting hand when we get into His bosom, clasp Him in our arms, hold firm and close possession of Him by faith.[c]

42—45. (42) set . . hand, one chief cause of distress was that God was actually strengthening Israel's enemies to overcome him. This expression means, "Thou hast confirmed the work of his adversaries." (43) turned the edge, not in our sense of blunting it: but turned back, defeated his attack, as expressed in the second clause. (44) his glory, *lit.* "Thou hast made him to cease from his purity," or splendour.[a] (45) youth, youthful strength. covered him, Ps. lxxi. 13, cix. 29.

*Serving God.*—The late Rev. Matthew Wilks was once waited upon by an American clergyman. He received him kindly, and after some conversation asked, "Have you anything more to tell me?" "Nothing particular." "Any other question to ask?" "No." "Then," said Mr. Wilks, "you must leave me: as I have my Master's business to attend to. Good morning." The clergyman said afterwards that he had received a lesson on the value of

time which he never forgot. The Rev. Joseph Alleine used to say, "Give me a Christian who counts his time more precious than gold."

46—48. (46) how long, Ps. lxxiv. 10, lxxix. 5. (47) my time,[a] comp. Job vii. 6, xiv. 1; Ps. xxxix. 5. (48) what man, howsoever strong.

*Why is man made in vain?* (*v.* 47).—I. Several circumstances which are calculated to suggest this question. 1. The shortness of human life; 2. The hardships of man's lot; 3. The disproportion between his faculties and his employments; 4. The low ends which man proposes to himself. II. The Scripture answer to this question. 1. God did not make man as he is; 2. Man is immortal; 3. God has provided for man eternal glory which will more than compensate for all his present ills.[b]

*A long life.*—The Rev. Augustus Toplady, in a funeral sermon he preached on the death of Mrs. Mary Wheaton, observed, "That God had spared her to a good old age: that she was born in the year 1675, ten years before the death of Charles II., and about fourteen before the coming in of King William III.; that she lived in the reigns of seven monarchs, and died last Tuesday, aged ninety-three." He adds, in his diary, "Great was my fervour and enlargement of soul; nor less, to appearance, the attention of them that heard. Nay, they seemed to do more than attend: the word, I verily believe, came with power and weight to their hearts. I never yet saw my church so full (insomuch that there was hardly any standing), and think I seldom, if ever, beheld a people that seemed to relish the Gospel better. Neither they nor myself were weary, though I detained them much longer than usual."

49—52. (49) former lovingkindnesses, shown in the reigns of David and Solomon. (50) bear . . bosom, the expression of intense sympathy with the afflicted nation. (51) reproached the footsteps, or every step he takes.[a] (52) blessed, *etc.*, comp. endings of Ps. xli., lxxii., cvi., each of which closes, as this does, a book of Psalms.[b]

*Former mercies* (*v.* 49).—I. The contents of the inquiry. 1. It implies a former acquaintance: 2. An imagined temporary cessation of intercourse; 3. It exhibits an ardent desire for a renewal of the intercourse; 4. It breathes a spirit of sincerity. II. The cheering replies to the inquiry. 1. Mercy still exists; 2. She is still at her old place of abode: 3. She is still in possession of her faculties; 4. She is still equally well disposed towards you. III. Probable result of an inquiry made in a proper spirit. 1. It will gain the Divine approbation; 2. Every probability of a renewal of the intercourse.[c]

*The Word of God a shield.*—Samuel Proctor was trained up in the use of religious ordinances, and in early life felt some religious impressions. He afterwards enlisted as a soldier in the first regiment of Foot Guards, and was made a grenadier. Notwithstanding this, the impressions made upon his mind continued; and the fear of the Lord, as a guardian angel, attended him through the changing scenes of life. There were a few in the regiment who met for pious and devotional exercises; he cast in his lot among them, and always carried a small pocket Bible in one pocket, and his hymn-book in the other. He took part in

*a* "Render, 'Remember what a mere fleeting life I am,' for 'What a mere nothing hast Thou created all the sons of men.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 47. *Dr. J. Donne*, i. 499; *J. B. Mozzillon*, 185; *J. Venn*, i. 321; *R. Hall*, vi. 129; *J. G. Foyster*, 362; *E. Butcher*, 409; *H. Marriott*, 44; *J. S. Boone*, 300.

*vv.* 47, 48. *J. Howe*, iii. 287.

*v.* 48. *A. Gray*, 101; *Dr. J. Edwards*, iii. 461; *Dr. W. Jones*, 281.

*b G. Brooks.* "Life is the soul's nursery."—*Thackeray.*

*a* "The Targum interprets this as a reproach, because of the tarrying of the footsteps of the Messiah. And so *Kimchi*, 'He delays so long in coming that they say He will never come.'"—*Perowne.*

*b* "The Ps. is not directly Messianic. The whole tone of expostulation and prayer belongs to local and temporary circumstances; but the anticipations are grounded on promises which have their true fulfilment in Christ."—*Spk. Com.*

*vv.* 51—53. *J. Alting*, Op. ii. p. 244.

*c D. Roberts.*

An aged woman lay on her death-bed. She had been a disciple of Christ for fifty years. When speaking to a friend, she said, "Tell all the children that an old woman, who is near to death, is very much grieved that she did not begin to love the Saviour when she was a little child. Tell them, 'Youth is the time to serve the Lord.'"

*d R. T. S.*

author,—Moses

*Subj., the brevity of life and unchangeableness of God.*

*a* De. xxxiii. 27; Ps. lxxi. 3, xci. 9.

*b* De. xxxii. 7, marg.

*c* De. xxxii. 18; Pr. xxvi. 10.

*d* Ge. ii. 4.

*e* Ge. iii. 19.

*f Jennings and Lowe.*

*g* The night was anciently divided into three watches, later into four.

*v.* 3. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 252; *A. Alison*, i. 93; *T. Dwight*, v. 390.

*h W. W. Whythe.*

*i R. T. S.*

"Be thine own home, and in thyself dwell; Inn anywhere; and seeing the snail, which everywhere doth roam carrying his own home still, still is at home, follow (for he is easy paced) this snail; be thine own palace,

the struggle on the plains of Waterloo, in 1815. In the evening of June 16th, in the tremendous conflict of that day, his regiment was ordered to dislodge the French from a wood of which they had taken possession, and from which they annoyed the allied army. While thus engaged, he was thrown a distance of four or five yards by a force on his hip, for which he could not account at the time; but when he came to examine his Bible he saw with overwhelming gratitude to the Preserver of his life, what it was that had thus driven him. A musket-ball had struck his hip where his Bible rested in his pocket, and penetrated nearly half through that sacred book. All who saw the ball said that it would undoubtedly have killed him had it not been for the Bible, which served as a shield. The Bible was kept as a sacred treasure, and laid up in his house, like the sword of Goliath in the tabernacle. "That Bible," said Proctor, "has twice saved me instrumentally—first from death in battle, and second from death eternal."[d]

## *PSALM THE NINETIETH.*

1—4. (1) **dwelling place**, place of refuge, or a home.[a] The Ps. was written when Israel only knew temporary resting-places in their journey. **in all generations**, *lit.* "in generation and generation."[b] (2) **formed**, by a bold metaphor the Divine act of creation is compared to childbirth.[c] "Before the earth and the world were born."[d] **the world**, a poetic term, usually indicating the *fruitful* earth. (3) to **destruction**, to dust and corruption.[e] (4) **when it is past**, rend. "For (a term of) a thousand years, when it is past, is in Thine eyes but as one bygone day."[f] **a watch**, shorter time even than a day or a night.[g]

*The home of the soul* (*v.* 1).—I. The relation which God bears to His people. 1. He is the source of their comfort; 2. Their shelter in danger: 3. The home of the soul. II. How we should contemplate this relation. With—1. Gratitude; 2. Humility; 3. Confidence; 4. Delight.[h]

*God's eternity* (*v.* 2).—One of the deaf and dumb pupils in the institution of Paris, being desired to express his idea of the eternity of the Deity, replied, "It is duration, without beginning or end; existence, without bound or dimension; present, without past or future. His eternity is youth, without infancy or old age; life, without birth or death; to-day, without yesterday or to-morrow."[i]—*The love of home.*—Love of home is planted deep in the nature of man. The finger of God points to home, and says to us all, there is the place to find your earthly joy. Shall we appeal to the testimony of those who have sought joy elsewhere, or have tried to find happiness in the world? We have but one answer from them all—that the search has been fruitless. Who aspires to a loftier elevation of honour than that attained by Burke? And yet he says he would not give one peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame in this world. What is the declaration of Byron, after having drained the cup of earthly pleasure to its dregs? It is that his life has been passed in wretchedness, and that he longs to rush into the thickest of the battle, that he may terminate his miserable existence by a sudden death. And Chesterfield, with rank, wealth, talent, polish, and

power, after having stood for half a century the brightest luminary in all the European circles of elegance and fashion, has left his most decisive testimony to the heartlessness and emptiness of all those joys he had so eagerly pursued. As we go through this world of trial and of change we can find our only joy in a life of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and domestic peace. Our firesides must be our sanctuaries, our refuge from misfortunes, our choice retreat from the world. It is not essential to the happy home that there should be the luxury of the carpeted floor, the richly cushioned sofa, the soft shade of the astral lamp. These elegances gild the apartments, but they reach not the heart. It is neatness, order, piety, and a cheerful heart which make home that sweet paradise it is so often found to be. There is joy as real, as heartfelt, by the cottage fire-side, as in the most splendid saloons of wealth and refinement.

5—7. (5) **with a flood**, a familiar image in the wilderness, where the dry wadies suddenly fill with tempestuous rains, and carry everything away in their flood.[a] **a sleep**, perhaps a figure for the death that thus suddenly seizes them; asleep in death. **morning**, after night of rain.[b] "Short as is human life, each mortal does but reach the morning of the real day of life." (6) **cut down**, *lit.* "one cuts him off."[c] (7) **consumed**, *etc.*, the Ps. was written when the connection of human transitoriness and human sin had been most impressively illustrated.[d]

*The life of man.*—Throughout this world, man is the only animal permitted by nature to arrive at old age. (We speak not, of course, of such domestic animals as are protected by man's fostering care.) Man is the only created being capable of such a privilege. He is the only being possessed of sufficient knowledge and forethought to enable him, during his years of strength and vigour, to provide for that period when decrepitude and decay will take the place of strength and energy. Elsewhere, throughout the world, no sooner does feebleness manifest itself in any living thing, than life is sacrificed, so that nothing but strength, health, and happiness are permitted to exist for any lengthened period.[e]

8—10. (8) **set . . before thee**, so as distinctly to notice and consider them. **our secret**, either *sin*, or *heart*,[a] may be added: lit. *secrets*, which we would gladly conceal from ourselves. **light**, revealing light. (9) **as a tale**, or as a *thought* that passes and is forgotten. Some take it. as a *sigh*, or *groan*. Others, as a breath: the Chaldee as "the breath of the mouth in winter."[b] (10) **days**, *etc.*, Ge. xlvii. 9. Seventy years was prob. the average, though Moses, Aaron, and Miriam lived longer. **if . . strength**, if there be fulness of strength, unusual bodily vigour. **their strength**, better *pride*, all in which men boast.

*The term of human life* (*v.* 10).—I. Human life rarely exceeds seventy or eighty years. II. Beyond that age it is marked by incapacity to labour. III. It is marked by liability to sorrow. IV. Death is soon to be expected.[c]

*Old age* (*v.* 10).—For many years there prevailed in China an extraordinary superstition and belief that the secret sect of Tas had discovered an elixir which bestowed immortality. No fewer than three emperors died, after swallowing a drink presented to them by the eunuchs of the palace, as the draught that was to

or the world's thy fall."—*Donne.*

"You cannot attend better to your sanctification, than by reflecting how you may immerse yourselves ever deeper into the love of God, and bathe more continually in the waves of His grace."—*Dr. Krummacher.*

*a* 1 Ki. xviii. 44, 45.

*b* "In the East, one night's rain works a change as if by magic. The field at evening was brown, parched, arid as a desert; in the morning it is green with the blades of grass. The scorching hot wind blows upon it, and again before evening it is withered."—*Perowne.*

*c* Ja. i. 11.

*d* Nu. xiv.

*e* *Prof. R. Jones.*

*a* "The whole inner being, the pollution and sinfulness of wh. is hidden from the man himself, till it is set in the light of God's countenance."—*Perowne.*

*b* "The complaint is of the shortness and misery of life through God's wrath; a complaint wh. has a singular propriety if uttered by Moses, who saw a generation of men perish before their time in a few years, and

multitudes perish in a moment, by special interposition of God."—*Spk. Com.*

*c G. Brooks.*

"*Little sins.*—You may make light of them now, but they are not to be trifled with; they edge us on so stealthily that you scarcely notice them; but by-and-by you will find it impossible to turn them out. I think of the Indian story of the morsel of a dwarf, who asked the king to give him all the ground he could cover with three strides. The king, seeing him so small, said 'Certainly;' whereupon the dwarf suddenly shot up into a tremendous giant, covered all the land with his first stride, all the water with the second, and with the third knocked the king down and took his throne."—*Rev. James Bolton.*

*d Dr. J. M. Neale.*

confer never-ending life. "The best method of prolonging life, and of making life happy," said a wise mandarin to one of these infatuated princes, "is to control your appetites, subdue your passions, and practise virtue! Most of your predecessors, O Emperor! would have lived to a good old age, had they followed the advice which I now give you!"—*Sin and its consequences.*—*The ancient ring.*—A man who wished to buy a handsome ring went into a jeweller's at Paris, and desired to see some. The jeweller showed him a very ancient gold ring, remarkably fine, and curious on this account, that on the inside of it were two little lion's claws. The buyer, while looking at the others, was playing with this; at last he purchased another, and went away. But he had scarcely reached home when first his hand, then his side, then his whole body, became numb and without feeling, as if he had had a stroke of the palsy; and it grew worse and worse, till the physician, who came in haste, thought him dying. "You must somehow have taken poison," he said. The sick man protested that he had not. At last some one remembered this ring; and it was then discovered to be what used to be called a death-ring, and which was often employed in those wicked Italian States three or four hundred years ago. If a man hated another, and desired to murder him, he would present him with one of them. In the inside was a drop of deadly poison, and a very small hole out of which it would not make its way except it was squeezed. When the poor man was wearing it, the murderer would come and shake his hand violently, the lion's claw would give his finger a little scratch, and in a few hours he was a dead man. Now see why I told you this story. For four hundred years this ring had kept its poison, and at the end of that time it was strong enough almost to kill the man who had unintentionally scratched his finger with the claw; for he was only saved by great skill on the part of the physician, and by the strongest medicines. I thought when I read that story how like this poison was to sin. You may commit a sin now, and for the present forget it; and perhaps ten or twelve years hence the wound you then, so to speak, gave yourself may break out again, and that more dangerously than ever. And the greatest danger of all is, lest the thoughts of sins we have committed, and the pleasure we had in committing them, should come back upon us in the hour of death.[d]

11—13. (11) **even .. wrath,** *lit.* "and Thy wrath according to a fear of Thee," *i.e.* who worthily connects this brevity of life with the Divine recognition of sin? "Who understands, practically for life's guidance, what Thine anger is?" (12) **so,** with such a godly fear.[a] **hearts,** faculties of intelligence here. (13) **return,** better, *turn*, from Thy fierce anger. **how long?** Ps. vi. 3. **repent thee,** Ex. xxxii. 12.

*Life fleeting* (*v.* 12).—I. The proper estimate of life. 1. It is temporary; 2. Preparative. II. The tendency to neglect the computation. 1. Secular concern; 2. Repugnance to death; 3. Dread of the future. III. The wisdom of a right estimate. 1. It will moderate our earthly affections; 2. It will reconcile us to our earthly afflictions; 3. It will stimulate us to earthly devotion.[b]—*Spiritual arithmetic.*—I. Add, each day, to the number of your graces. II. Subtract, each day, from your sinful habits. III. Multiply, each day, your endeavours after salvation. IV.

*a* "Even he that is best in arithmetic, and can most precisely and accurately understand and investigate millions of millions, is nevertheless to seek how to count fourscore years in his own life. Surely it is a monstrous thing that men should measure all distances without themselves, know how many feet the

Divide each day into its appropriate occupations. V. Proportion, each day, your thankfulness to your mercies.[c]

*Queen Elizabeth.*—With all the strength of mind which Queen Elizabeth possessed, she had the weakness of her sex as far as related to her age and her personal attractions. "The majesty and gravity of a sceptre," says a contemporary of this great princess, "could not alter that nature of a woman in her. When Bishop Rudd was appointed to preach before her, he, wishing in a godly zeal, as well became him, that she should think some time of mortality, being then sixty-three years of age, he took his text, fit for that purpose, out of the Psalms, xc. 12, 'O teach us to number our days, that we may incline our hearts unto wisdom;' which text he handled most learnedly. But when he spoke of some sacred mystical numbers, as three for the Trinity, three times three for the heavenly hierarchy, seven for the Sabbath, and seven times seven for a jubilee; and, lastly, nine times seven for the grand climacterical year (her age), she, perceiving whereto it tended, began to be troubled with it. The bishop discovering all was not well, for the pulpit stood opposite her majesty, he fell to treat of some plausible numbers, as of the number 666, making Latinus, with which, he said, he could prove Pope to be Antichrist, etc. He still, however, interlarded his sermon with Scripture passages, touching the infirmities of age, as that in Ecclesiasticus, 'When the grinders shall be few in number, and they wax dark that look out of the windows, etc., and the daughters of singing shall be abased;' and more to that purpose. The queen, as the manner was, opened the window; but she was so far from giving him thanks or good countenance, that she said plainly, 'He might have kept his arithmetic for himself; but I see the greatest clerks are not the wisest men;' and so she went away discontented."[d]

**14—17.** (14) **early**, in the morning,[a] the poetic figure for speedily, and thoroughly. (15) **according**, *etc.*, i.e. for a time bearing some proportion to the time of humiliation. God's chastisements are only for a season,[b] and open out into long days of rejoicing. **afflicted**, or humbled, De. viii. 2. (16) **thy work**,[c] or working: the signs of Thy power. With special reference to bringing Israel into the promised inheritance. (17) **beauty**, or graciousness;[d] or the glory of the manifest and gracious Divine presence with them.

*The cause of God* (*vv.* 16, 17).—I. The views that are here taken of the cause of God. 1. It is His work; 2. It is His glory; 3. It is His beauty. II. The prayers that are here offered in behalf of the cause of God. 1. That His people may enjoy abundant evidence of its prosperity; 2. That it may prevail among the rising generation, and may be perpetuated to posterity; 3. That it may be stable and permanent. Learn:—(1) Let the prayer of Moses be ours: (2) Let us not stand aloof from the cause of God; (3) Let us not engage in the cause of Satan.[e]

*A consecrated life.*—The Rev. John Wesley, in his seventy-eighth year, wrote thus:—"By the blessing of God, I am just the same as when I was in my twenty-eighth; in 1769, I weighed 122 pounds, in 1781 I weighed not a pound more or less." When he was eighty, he declared that he was no more infirm than during the vigour of manhood. Four years afterwards he said, "I am not so agile as I was; I neither move nor walk so fast as moon is distant from the centre of the earth, how much space is between planet and planet, and finally to comprehend all the dimensions both of heaven and earth, and yet cannot number threescore and ten years in their own case."—*Calvin.*

*v.* 11. *T. Adams*, iii. 95; *Dr. R. South*, viii. 204; *W. Dunlop*, ii. 365. *vv.* 11, 12. *J. Alting*, Op. ii. p. 3, 246; *J. Adams*, 162; *H. Smith*, 229; *Dr. I. Barrow*, iii. 71; *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 250; *Bp. T. Wilson*, ii. 307; *J. Saurin*, vi. 285.

*b W. W. Whythe.*

*c Ibid.*

"God is the agent in bringing man to death and the grave. All the natural causes of death are only the modes and means of its accomplishment by the hand of God."—*Dwight.*

*d Percy Anec.*

*a* La. iii. 32, 33.

*b* Ps. xxx. 5; Is. xii. 1, xl. 1, 2, lxi. 2, 3.

*c* Hab. iii. 2.

*d* Gracious favour, propitiousness.

*e G. Brooks.*

*v.* 14. *Dr. J. Donne*, iii. 440; *A. Fuller*, 656; *Dr. E. Payson*, iii. 384; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan*, 66.

*v.* 15. *A. Fuller*, 672.

"There is something in this Ps. that is wonderfully striking and solemn, acquainting us with the profoundest depths of the Divine Nature..... The author, whoever

he may be, is plainly a man grown grey with a vast experience, here taking his stand at the end of his earthly course."—*Ewald.*

*f Whitecross.*

I did; my sight is a little impaired; I find also some decay in my memory; yet I feel nothing like weariness either in travelling or preaching." On his eighty-sixth birthday he says, "I am now an old man." In 1790 he says, "I am decayed from head to foot. However, blessed be God! I do not slack in my labours; I can preach and write still." In a letter which he wrote to his friends in America, early in 1791, he expressed his conviction, in the language of his father when under similar circumstances, that his end was approaching: "Time," said he, "has shaken me by the hand, and death is not far behind." He shortly afterwards preached his last sermon, and died the 2nd of March in the same year.*f*

author,—unknown

## *PSALM THE NINETY-FIRST.*

*Subj., the safety of the man who trusts in God. It is called, in the Talmud, "a song of accidents," i.e. a protective or talismanic song in times of danger. Comp. with it Job v. 17—23.*

1—4. (1) secret place, or covert.[a] most High, far above the rage and malice of enemies. Almighty, so that none can withstand His power. abide, *lit.* pass the night. (2) I will say, this is prob. the response of a second voice. the Lord, *i.e.* Jehovah, the covenant God of His believing people. fortress, 2 Sa. xxii. 2. The word here used also means *a net;* comp. with *v.* 3. (3) snare, *etc.*, comp. Ps. cxxiv. 7.[b] noisome pestilence, *lit.* pestilence of malignity; or plagues of mischiefs. (4) cover .. trust, a figure prob. taken from De. xxxii. 11. buckler, Heb. *socherah*, prob. coat of mail as worn by Assyrian warriors.[c]

*The snare of the fowler* (*v.* 3).—I. A few words about the snare of the fowler. 1. It is intimately connected with secrecy: 2. It is generally noted for its adaptation; 3. It is frequently connected with pleasure, profit, and advantage; 4. It is sometimes seen in the force of example; 5. When he fails to take his bird by deceit, he will go a-hawking after it. II. The deliverance. God delivers—1. By trouble; 2. By giving His people strength; 3. Sometimes when they get into the snare. III. In conclusion, dwell on the word surely. 1. It is made sure by the promises of God; 2. Because Jesus has taken His oath that He will do it.[d]

*The best hiding-place.*—The imagery of the Psalm is, for the most part, of a martial character. Safety within fortifications and on the battle-field, as well as amidst a devastating epidemic, is brought to view. The whole lyric might well be entitled "The Commander's Ode, the Soldier's Psalm of Life." It helped to fortify the courage as well as piety of that brave and admirable man, Captain Hedley Vicars. "The little book of Psalms you gave me," he wrote to a friend, "I take with me whenever I go out to walk. I have just learned by heart Psalm ninety-first, and it has filled me with confidence in Jesus." "I have heard," said the Rev. Isaac Toms once to his daughter, "I have heard of Dryden's contentment when sitting under the statue of Shakespeare; and that Buffon, the celebrated naturalist, felt himself happy at the feet of Sir Isaac Newton; but," said he, pointing to a picture which hung over his desk, "here you find me under the shadow of good Richard Baxter. Yet, my dear," adds the aged saint, "the most desirable situation in which we can be placed is to be under the shadow of the Almighty,—under the protection of the great Redeemer."

*a* "It is prob., fr. v. 4, that the allusion in *vv.* 1, 2, is to the overshadowing wings of the cherubim in the most holy place, rather than to the shelter fr. heat and storm afforded to the traveller by the rock-hewn caves of Palestine."—*Spk. Com.*

Ps. xvii. 8, xxvii. 5, xxxi. 20, xxxii. 7.

"The meaning of the *v.* is, 'Loving faith on man's part shall be met by faithful love on God's part.'"—*Kay.*

*b* Ps. xviii. 5; Ho. ix. 8; 2 Ti. ii. 26. See also Eccl. ix. 12.

*c Wordsworth.*

See on whole Ps. *W. Bridge*, i. 465; *Card. Bellarmine*, vi. 859; *St. Bernard, Dr. A. Ritel*, Op. ii. 390.

*v.* 1. *T. Manton*, v. 1044; *W. Taylor*, 220.

*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

5—8. (5) terror by night, when alarms are peculiarly affecting.[a] arrow, "used figuratively of the evil plots and slanders of the wicked, as in Ps. lvii. 4, lviii. 7, lxiv. 3."[b] (6) walketh, with allusion to the destroying angel, Ex. xi. 4. (7) side, or left hand.[c] it . . thee, "the singular is used as referring to any and every one of the evils mentioned in *vv.* 5, 6. (8) with thine eyes, so thou shalt be an observer only, and not a sufferer.[d]

*The terror by night* (*v.* 5).—I. What is this terror by night? It may be the cry of fire, or the noise of thieves, or fancied appearances, or the shriek of sudden sickness or death. II. Why we should not fear. God our Father is here, and will be here through all the lonely hours. He is an Almighty watcher, a sleepless guardian, a faithful friend. III. It may be night in the soul, but there need be no terror, for the love of God changes not.[e]

*A little child's confidence in God.*—A little boy of four years old was sleeping one night in a low bed, in the same room with his mother. He was a lovely and thoughtful child, and though so young had already received fully into his mind the idea of the great God who made him and rules over all. He was happy in having been taught to pray to this great God, and was daily in the habit of asking what he most wanted of his heavenly Father without fear and without doubt. But this night of which I speak he awoke out of sleep with a loud cry, as if he had been disturbed by a frightful dream. When his mother tenderly inquired what was the matter, he told her that he was afraid, and begged to know if God would indeed take care of him. When his mother assured him that God would take care of him in the darkness as well as in the light, he sunk back upon his pillow and sighed out, "How good it is that we have a God!" He then fell asleep peacefully, as if he felt the everlasting arms around him.

9—12. (9) because, *etc.*, in this *v.* the Psalmist no longer addresses himself, but turns trustingly to speak to God. This change of persons is somewhat perplexing. habitation, as Ps. xc. 1. (10) evil, any kind of external calamity. plague, a term generally used of special Divine visitations. dwelling, *lit.* tent.[a] (11) angels charge, Ps. xxxiv. 7. over thee, for thy benefit.[b] all thy ways, *i.e.* in the appointed path of duty.[c] (12) in their hands,[d] or *upon*, "the angels, as flying ones, lift the righteous upon their pinions." dash, *etc.*, a fig. suitable to a journeying psalm.

*Guardian angels.*—Consider two facts. I. That God has angels at His command. They are—1. Spiritual existences; 2. Full of vitality; 3. Rich in knowledge; 4. Mighty in power; 5. Countless in number; 6. Of great variety. II. That God employs His angels to help good men on earth. Then—1. There must be some method by which they can communicate with man; 2. That the spiritual interests of man must be supremely important; 3. That it is consonant with the highest dignity to minister to the lowly; 4. That it is a profound disgrace to man that he should feel so little interest in the spiritual concerns of his brother; 5. That the humblest Christians may take courage.[e]

*God's providence house.*—The city of Chester is remarkable for its quaint old buildings, its curious "rows" and ancient

*a* Song Sol. iii. 8; Pr. iii. 23—26. "In allusion, prob., to night attacks like those of Gideon, a favourite artifice of Oriental warfare, or perhaps to a destruction like that of Sennacherib." — *Perowne.*

*b* *Jennings and Lowe.* "The arrow may be God's arrow, as *e.g.* the pestilence, or any noxious influence, such as the simoom, or sirocco, wh. is said to prevail most commonly in the daytime." — *Spk. Com.*

*c* Comp. De. xxxii. 30.

*d* "Only a spectator shalt thou be, being thyself inaccessible and left to survive, conscious that thou thyself art a living one in contrast with those who are dying." — *Delitzsch.* Ex. xiv. 30.

*e* *C. H. Spurgeon.*

*a* "An instance of the way in wh. the patriarchal life became stereotyped, so to speak, in the language." — *Perowne.* Possible allusion to Ex. xii. 23.

*b* He. i. 14.

*c* "Satan omitted these words when he tempted Jesus to go *his* way, and to cast himself down fr. the pinnacle of the temple. Mat. iv. 6; Lu. iv. 10, 11." — *Words-worth.*

*d* Ex. xix. 4; De. i. 31; Ps. xxxvii. 24; Is. lxiii. 9.

*e* *Dr. Thomas.*

*vv.* 10—12. *F. E.*

remains; but in nothing, perhaps, is it more so than in the illustration furnished by an incident which took place within its walls, as memorialised by an inscription on the front of one of its houses. It is related that at one time when the plague was raging, and like a destroying angel was entering house after house, until the terrified inhabitants were fleeing for their lives from what appeared to be a doomed city, one man with his family determined to remain, placing themselves under the fatherly protection and good providence of God. In every street and almost every house were the sick and dying or dead. Grass grew in the streets for very want of traffic therein. Nearer and still nearer to the good man's dwelling did the fearful scourge come, until both the houses on either side were attacked; still none within its doors were injured. Gradually the plague was stayed, until it altogether ceased. The people who had fled by degrees took courage and returned. There they found the trusting Christian with his family, all safe amidst surrounding death. To testify his gratitude he had this remarkable inscription carved on the beam in front of the house, "God's providence is mine inheritance." And there it still remains, a silent yet eloquent memorial of God's gracious protection of His trusting servant, and of the Christian's prayerful dependence upon his Father's watchful care.

13—16. (13) **tread,** trample under foot.[a] **lion,** *etc.*, all the enemies, natural and spiritual, of mankind.[b] **young lion,** regarded as especially fierce. **dragon,** Heb. *tannin*, sea-monster: here, one of the serpent tribe. (14) **set his love,** comp. De. vii. 7, x. 15. **set him on high,** as *v.* 12. **known my name,** my covenant name, *Jehovah*. (15) **with . . trouble,** Ps. xlvi. 1. **honour him,** 1 Sa. ii. 30. (16) **long life,** the special promise of the O. T. dispensation.[c]

*Love and deliverance* (*v.* 14).—Here the Father proclaims the grand principle of His dealings with His Son: what He did for Him, and why He did it, that we may know why and what He does for us. Deliverance and exaltation are the two special blessings promised. The reason of this is—I. He sets His love upon me. II. He knew my name. We inquire—1. Into the deliverance; 2. The reason for it. Learn—(1) That God wants to be loved; (2) He is infinitely worthy of it; (3) He blesses and rewards them that love Him.[d]

*Rev. T. Scott.*—In the memoir of this eminent commentator, it is stated that at one time of his life he was called to struggle with many difficulties, but received at the same time many unexpected helps. "I had," says he, "frequent attacks of sickness; and after one long and dangerous illness, which had occasioned heavy additional expenses, my wife, who was seldom disposed to distrust Providence, lamented to see the increase of our debts, as the medical charges amounted to above ten pounds. It was my turn on this occasion to be the stronger in faith, and I answered confidently, 'Now observe if the Lord do not in some way send us an additional supply to meet this expense, which it is not in our power to avoid.' I had, at the time, no idea of the source whence the additional supply was to be derived; but in the afternoon of the same day, when I was visiting my people, Mr. Higgins, jun., called at my house, and left a paper, which he said, when I had filled up the blanks, would entitle me to ten

*Page*, 305; *C. Wheatly*, iii. 232; *I. Ambrose*, 373; *T. Shepherd*, 79; *H. Melvill*, ii. 210.

"The regenerate soul hath three principal faculties, as the natural body hath three principal members: the eye, hand, and foot. In the soul the eye is knowledge, the hand is faith, the foot is obedience. The soul without knowledge is like Bartimens, blind; without faith, like the man with the withered hand; without obedience, like Mephibosheth, lame."—*T. Adams.*

*a* "In the narrow mountain passes of the East obstacles can often be overcome in no other manner than by walking over them."—*Spk. Com.*

Lu. x. 19; Mk. xvi. 18.

*b* "They are called lions and fierce lions fr. the side of their open power, which threatens destruction, and adders and dragons fr. the side of their venomous secret malice."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* De. xxxii. 46, 47.

*v.* 16. *Bp. Lake, A Meditation.*

*d Dr. H. Bonar.*

"God, saith Chrysostom, hath given a man two eyes; if he lose one he hath another: but he hath but one soul; if he lose that it is irrecoverable, it can

pounds from a sum of money left for the relief of poor clergymen. This I never received at any other time, nor can I recollect the source from which it came."

## PSALM THE NINETY-SECOND.

**1—4.** (1) **good thing**, not merely right, but delightful. **sing praises**, the word denotes sing with musical accompaniment, as in the sanctuary. (2) **every night**, or in the nights: with reference to the time of evening sacrifice. (3) **upon**, *etc.*, two instruments only are mentioned, the *harp* being a general term for the stringed instruments.[a] (4) **work**, should be *works*, providential dispensations.

*God admired in His works* (*vv.* 4, 5).—I. The works contemplated. 1. The wonders of creation; 2. The dispensations of Providence; 3. The work of redemption. II. The Psalmist's experience in the contemplation of them. He was filled with—1. Triumphant joy; 2. With adoring gratitude. Address—(1) Those who are strangers to this frame; (2) Those who aspire after it.[b]

*Wonders of creation.*—We cannot look around us without being struck by the surprising variety and multiplicity of the sources of beauty of creation, produced by form, or by colour, or by both united. It is scarcely too much to say that every object in nature, animate or inanimate, is in some manner beautiful, so largely has the Creator provided for our pleasures through the sense of sight. It is rare to see anything which is in itself distasteful, or disagreeable to the eye, or repulsive: while on this, however, they are alone entitled to pronounce who have cultivated the faculty in question; since, like every other quality of mind as of body, it is left to ourselves to improve that, of which the basis has been given to us, as the means of cultivating it have been placed in our power. May I not also say that this beauty has been conferred in wisdom, as in beneficence? It is one of the revelations which the Creator has made of Himself to man. He was to be admired and loved: it was through the demonstrations of His character that we could alone see Him and judge of Him; and in thus inducing or compelling us to admire and love the visible works of His hand, He has taught us to love and adore Himself. This is the great lesson which the beauty of creation teaches, in addition to the pleasure which it affords; but, for this, we must cultivate that simple, and surely amiable piety, which learns to view the Father of the universe in all the works of that universe. Such is the lesson taught by that certainly reasonable philosophy which desires to unite what men have too much laboured to dissever; a state of mind which is easily attainable, demands no effort of feeling beyond that of a simple and good heart, and needs not diverge into a weak and censurable enthusiasm. Much, therefore, is he to be pitied or condemned who has not cultivated this faculty in this manner: who is not for ever looking round on creation, in feeling and in search of those beauties; that he may thus bend in gratitude and love before the Author of all beauty.[d]

**5—8.** (5) **how great**, the language of adoring faith. **thy thoughts**, fr. Heb. verb meaning *to weave*.[e] **very deep**, Ps. xl.

never be made up again."—*T. Watson.*

author,—unknown

*A Sabbath-day Psalm. Subj., prosperity the reward of righteousness.*

*a* "In skilful playing with the cithern."—*Delitzsch.*

"With a solemn sound on the harp."—*Revised Eng. Bib.*

*v.* 1. *T. Scott*, v. 561; *J. Vincent*, 265; *W. Dealtry*, 153.

*v.* 2. *T. Armory*, 40.

*b C. Simeon*

"The heavens are a point from the pen of His perfection; the world is a rose-bud from the bower of His beauty; the sun is a spark from the light of His wisdom; and the sky a bubble on the sea of His power."—*Sir W. Jones.*

"The great Sovereign sends ten thousand worlds to tell us He resides above them all, in glory's unapproachable recess."—*Young.*

"The stars hang bright above, silent, as if they watch'd the sleeping earth."—*Coleridge.*

*d Macculloch.*

*e* "The word gives a good idea of the won-

derful intricacy and contrivance with wh. the Div. Mind designs and executes His plans, till at length the result is seen in a beautifully woven tissue of many delicately mingled and coloured threads."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* Ps. lxxiii. 22.

*c* "Therefore that we may behold the judgments of God, that are not seen in the world, the prophet gives us to understand by the word *high* that God dealeth not after our pleasure, but as comports with His eternity."—*Calvin.*

*d J. Lee, M.A.*

*e Cowper.*

5. (6) **brutish**, "man in his rude, uncultivated state, as by nature."[b] **fool**, Ps. xiv. 1. (7) **it is . . for ever**, *lit.* "for, or with reference to, their being destroyed." (8) **most high**, or throned on high.[c]

*The thoughts of God* (*v.* 5).—I. They are original. II. They are comprehensive. III. They are searching. IV. They are mysterious.[d]

*Delight in the works of creation.*—

Acquaint thyself with God, if thou wouldst taste
His works. Admitted once to His embrace,
Thou shalt perceive that thou wast blind before.
Thine eye shall be instructed: and thy heart,
Made pure, shall relish with divine delight,
Till then unfelt, what hands Divine have wrought.
The soul that sees Him, or receives sublimed
New faculties, or learns at least to employ
More worthily the powers she owned before,
Discerns in all things what, with stupid gaze
Of ignorance, till then she overlooked,—
A ray of heavenly light, gilding all forms
Terrestrial in the vast and the minute;
The unambiguous footsteps of the God
Who gives its lustre to an insect's wing,
And wheels His throne upon the rolling worlds.[e]

9–11. (9) **be scattered**, melt away, disperse. (10) **unicorn**, or buffalo, Nu. xxiii. 22.[a] For the figure of speech see Ps. lxxxix. 17. **anointed**, *etc.*, Ps. xxiii. 5. The expression, "I am anointed with *fresh* oil," denotes ease, refreshment, and health. (11) Omit the words in italics. **shall see**, or look on, with the calm disdain of perfect security.[b] **enemies**, *lit.* those who lie in wait for me.

*The mercy of God.*—Let the moderation and forbearance of God make an impression of mercy on us toward each other: let us not by ingratitude, nor obstinacy—our iron sinew—exasperate God to judgment, which is called "His strange work." Toward which He walked so slowly, when He went to doom Adam, and deferred it to the cool of the day; whereas He ran to meet the returning prodigal; and renews His mercies every morning, and is still beforehand with us: like the sun, bidding us good morrow before we are up.[c]

*a* Job xxxix. 9.

"Suggested trans., 'My old age is green with vigour.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Ps. xxxvii. 34.

*c W. Price* (1646).

12–15. (12) **palm tree . . cedar**, "selected as the loveliest images of verdure, fruitfulness, undecaying vigour, and perpetuity."[a] Comp. *v.* 7. **in Lebanon**, where only a few of the ancient cedars now remain. (13) **planted**, *etc.*, it is probable, but not certain, that trees were planted in the temple courts. (14) **in old age**,[b] the proof of surprising vitality. **fat**, *i.e.* full of sap. **flourishing**, rich in verdure. (15) **to shew**, to manifest and vindicate the righteousness of God's government. **rock**, De. xxxii. 4.

*The godly like a palm tree.*—I. Flourishes in the desert. II. Has his principle of life from within. III. Reveals the hidden springs whence he derives his support. IV. Is exceedingly useful. V. Yields his richest fruit in his maturity.[c]—*The prosperity of the righteous* (*v.* 12).—I. Who shall flourish? II. How shall they flourish? III. Where shall they flourish? IV. When shall

*a* "Throughout the year, the winter's cold as in the summer's heat, the palm continues green; not by years but by centuries is the cedar's age reckoned."—*Tholuck.*

Refs. to the palm, Song Sol. vii. 7; Jer. x. 5.

*b* Ps. xci. 16.

*c J. Muncaster.*

they flourish? V. Why shall they flourish? VI. Who can bear testimony to this?[d]—*The palm.*—Descr. diff. beauty of trees, and how many wise and holy lessons they may be made to teach us. Palms not seen by many; grows in Holy Land. Specimens often seen in our public gardens: *e.g.* at Kew. Describe palm (*Topics*, i. 84). Good people, *i.e.* those who, in God's strength, try to do right, are in many ways like palms. Comp. the wicked descr. as like the heath of desert (Jer. xvii. 6, etc.). I. In palm the stem is tall, slender, and graceful; not only strong, but also beautiful; if we do right we shall be sure to grow lovely. The God who made the flowers and the sky cares for beauty as well as strength. Some good people are like gnarled and twisted apple trees, fruitful, but ugly. II. The p. grows on without taking notice of the weather. This cannot be said of every tree, only of one whose deep springs are beneath. It is easy to be good in summer-time, when everything helps us; it is a far greater thing to be good in winter-time, when everything seems against us. III. Nothing will sway the p. fr. its uprightness. If a heavy weight were put on it, it would still force its way up. Ill. Joseph had weight on, but he could not be bent. IV. On p. the leaves open to the sun, and fruits hang down to earth. We must open our characters to God, and then we shall be kept humble. We may hand down to men our fruits of loving, gentle and kindly deeds. V. Wherever there is p. there is sure to be water. This is p. tree's secret; it is fed by hidden streams. So a secret to every one who is truly good. They feed on secret communions with God. Their tree planted by the river of life. If you want to be truly good, the answer is, God will show you the way, and has sent His dear Son to teach and help you.[e]

*The palm and the cedar.*—How beautiful is the language of the Psalmist, "The righteous shall flourish like the palm tree; he shall grow like the cedar in Lebanon. Those that be planted in the house of the Lord shall flourish in the courts of our God. They shall still bring forth fruit in their old age; they shall be fat and flourishing" (Ps. xcii. 12—14). The palm is indigenous to tropical and other warm climates. It grows to a considerable height and size, and presents a beautiful appearance. Its fruits, which are called dates, are much valued, and are eaten both fresh and preserved, and are also pressed for both syrup and wine. But it is not for its fruit alone that the palm is so valuable. From the boughs, which are yearly lopped off from the lower parts of the stem, are made baskets, bird-cages, ropes, and sacks; from the leaves, mattresses, sandals, etc. It is an evergreen, and lives to an extreme old age; the wood is durable and much used. How striking an emblem of a good man—he shall flourish like the palm tree. The cedar was considered by the Hebrews as the monarch of the vegetable world, on account of its magnitude, majesty, the number and extent of its boughs, and the durability of its wood, which was so remarkable that some supposed it to be incorruptible. Moreover, everything about the Oriental cedar has a strong balsamic odour, and hence the whole forest is so perfumed with fragrance, that a walk through it is delightful. Mount Lebanon was in ancient times covered with forests of cedars, of which, however, few only now remain. Again we say to the Christian, Behold your emblem: "He shall grow like a cedar in Lebanon."[f]

The date palm has been known to produce 600 lbs. weight of fruit.

*vv.* 13, 14. *S. Perrott*, 287; *Dr. R. Hawker*, ii. 78.

*v.* 14. *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 346.

[d] *W. Jay.*

[e] *Hive. Outline of S.S. Address.*

"The fickleness of professors is a stumbling-block to the world. They all say, as Cato of the civil wars between Cæsar and Pompey—'*Quem fugiam, video; quem sequar, non video.*' They know whom to avoid, but not whom to follow. And as they honour truth, so the flourishing of your own souls depends on it. A tree often removed from one soil to another can never be expected to be fruitful; 'tis well if it make shift to live."—*Flavel.*

[f] *J. A. James.*

"As we know the odorous vines of rare and exquisite flowers which are grown behind high, opaque garden walls, only by the fragrance which they waft to us through the air, while they themselves are invisible; so are we conscious of the heavenly and spiritual elements of noble natures about us rather by their effect upon us than by any open spectacle of them."—*H. W. Beecher.*

author,—unknown

*A Ps. celebrating the majesty of Jehovah as Ruler of the universe.*

*a Calvin.*
*b Jennings and Lowe.*

*c. 5. Bp. Ravenscroft*, i. 645. "The amount of common salt in all the oceans is estimated by Schafhäutl at 3,051,342 cubic geographical miles; or about five times more than the mass of the Alps, and only one-third less than that of the Himayala. The sulphate of soda equals 633,644·36 cubic miles, or is equal to the mass of the Alps. The chloride of magnesium, 441,811·80 cubic miles; the lime salts 109 339·44 cubic miles. He supposes the mean depth to be about 300 metres, as estimated by Humboldt. Admitting with Laplace that the mean depth is from four to five miles, which is more probable, the mass of marine salt will be more than double the mass of the Himalaya."—*Silliman. c Naturalist's Note Book.*

author,—unknown: LXX. says, David

*Subj., an appeal to God against wicked oppressors.*

*a Fausset.*

## *PSALM THE NINETY-THIRD.*

1—5. (1) reigneth, better, *has become King:* His kingdom is visibly established. clothed, *etc.*, Is. li. 9, lxiii. 1. (2) throne, this term denotes the righteous sway and government of God.[a] of old, though long disregarded by His creatures. (3) floods, fig. for the great world-powers by wh. the Israelites were successively oppressed. waves, or roaring: the dashing of the surf in thunders upon the shore. (4) on high is mightier, "the tide cannot reach the height of Heaven, where Jehovah sits enthroned in glory."[b] (5) testimonies, perhaps generally for the Divine rule and laws. holiness, showing itself in simple trust and hearty obedience.

*The waves of the sea* (*v.* 4).—Dr. Arnot affirms that no wave rises more than ten feet from the ordinary sea level, which, with ten feet that its surface afterwards descends below this, gives twenty feet for the whole height from the bottom of any water-valley to the adjoining summit. The observations of the French Exploring Expedition in the midst of the Pacific Ocean confirm the view of Dr. Arnot: the greatest height was there found to be twenty-two feet. The *longest wave* was met by the expedition S. of New Holland, and was three times the length of the frigate, or 492 feet. Mr. Scott Russell states:—"Few persons can realise the magnificent effect of standing on the cliffs of the W. coast of Ireland, and observing the great breakers rolling in from the Atlantic, some of which, I have convinced myself, are fifty feet high, and occasionally they reach the magnitude of 150 feet."—*Deep sea life.*—"Dr. Carpenter's recent investigations in this direction are of great interest. They teach us that the bottom of the deep ocean is the home of many creatures, who live there in the absence of light, under great pressure, in water often excessively cold—just above freezing point—abounding in carbonic acid, and in organic matter. Of these influences, the one which makes itself most felt is that of cold. It is this, and not the pressure, not the want of bright sunlight, that stunts the creatures, and reproduces at the bottom of equatorial seas the fame of arctic surface regions. There seems to be a vast thin sheet of living matter enveloping the whole earth beneath the seas. At these great depths there is no vegetation properly so called, and Professor Thomson is of opinion that the living beings feed on the organic matter which exists in the water in large quantity, and the precise nature of which is unknown. Much of this 'ooze' is nothing but incipient chalk, and as these animals decay, they slowly build up at the bottom of the ocean strata similar to those we find in the chalk formations."[c]

## *PSALM THE NINETY-FOURTH.*

1—4. (1) vengeance, "God's revenge is His judicial infliction of righteous punishment."[a] shew thyself, *lit.* "shine forth." (2) lift up thyself, Is. xxxiii. 10. earth, or land of the Hebrews. reward, wh. would take the form of a judgment. (3) how long, comp. Rev. vi. 10. (4) The words in italics are

not needed. utter, babble out. hard things, words of arrogance. boast themselves, carry themselves high.

*Trust in the living God.*—Mrs. Beecher Stowe relates a striking incident which once gave to a speech, which Frederick Douglas was delivering, a startling and almost overwhelming power. Douglas was descanting, in his usually impassioned manner, upon the wrongs and miseries of the negro race. Warming with his subject, and waxing more and more indignant with their persecutors, he seemed to lose all patience, and at last said that they must henceforth trust in the strength of their own right arms, seeing that it was in vain otherwise to hope for deliverance. At this moment there rose a tall aged negress, who, while perfect silence reigned throughout the hall, said, in a voice not loud but deep, which thrilled every heart in that excited assembly, "*Frederick! is God dead?*"

5—8. (5) break in pieces, with prob. ref. to Ps. xciii. 3, *crush.*[a] heritage, Ex. vi. 8. (6) widow, *etc.*, those whose distresses ought to excite compassion; "domestic tyrants seem to be aimed at."[b] (7) they say, in their hearts. The strength of tyrannical and wicked doings is practical atheism. (8) brutish, Ps. xlix. 10, xcii. 6.

*The captive's release.*—"In the war called Braddock's war, my father was an officer in the British Navy. One night as they were running close to the coast of Barbary, the officer on deck heard some person singing. A moment convinced them that he was singing the Old Hundredth psalm tune. They immediately conjectured that the singer was a Christian captive, and determined to attempt his rescue. Twenty stout sailors, armed with pistols and cutlasses, manned the ship's boats and approached the shore. Directed by the voice of singing and prayer, they soon reached the abode of the Christian captive. It was a little hut at the bottom of his master's garden on a small river. They burst open the door, and took him from his knees, and in a few moments he was on the ship's deck frantic with joy. The account he gave of himself was, that his name was M'Donald, that he was a native of Scotland, and had been a captive eighteen years; he had obtained the confidence of his master, was his chief gardener, and had the privilege of living by himself. He said he was not at all surprised when they burst open his door, for the Turks had often done so, and whipped him when on his knees."[c]

9—11. (9) planted, suitable fig. bec. the ear is set deep in the head.[a] see, the deeds described, *vv.* 5, 6. (10) heathen, nations, by providential judgments. correct, His own erring people. (11) vanity, *lit.* "a breath,"[b] *they* may apply to mankind, not merely to their thoughts.

*The vanity of human thoughts* (*v.* 11).—I. With respect to the present world. 1. Seeking satisfaction where none is to be found; 2. Poring on events which cannot be recalled; 3. Anticipating evils which never befall us; 4. Valuing ourselves on things of little or no account; 5. Laying plans which must be disconcerted. II. With regard to religion. 1. What are the thoughts of the heathen world? 2. Of the Christian world where God's thoughts are neglected? 3. Atheistic thoughts that induce multitudes to act as if there were no God; 4. Thoughts of the

De. xxxii. 35; Je. li. 56.

"How foolish it is to think that art intended an end in making a window to see through, and that nature intended none in making an eye to see with."—*Campanella.*

*a* Pr. xxii. 22; Is. iii. 15.

*b* *Perowne.*

*v.* 7. *T. Rennell,* 182; *Dr. S. Carr,* iii. 137.

*vv.* 7—10. *J. Saurin,* ii. 347.

*vv.* 8—11. *Jon. Edwards,* ii. 247.

"Oh, give me liberty! for were ev'n Paradise my prison, still I should long to leap the crystal walls."—*Dryden.*

"A day, an hour of virtuous liberty, is worth a whole eternity in bondage."—*Addison.*

*c* *Christian Advocate.*

*a* "Everything which is good and excellent in the creature must be possessed in absolute perfection by the Creator."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Ge. vi. 5.

*v.* 9. *F. Carmichael,* 81; *J. C. Galloway,* 141; *J. Charlesworth,* ii. 163; *Dr. A. Rees,* iv. 466; *A. B.*

*Evans*, 96; *J. S. Boone*, 23.

*v.* 11. *J. Balguy*, ii. 57; *R. Warneford*, i. 199; *A. Fuller*, 661.

*c A. Fuller.*

"The more gross the subject, the less susceptible of pain; as a beast cannot suffer as man, nor a man's body as his soul. Hence the soul being the highest, tenderest, and most susceptible part of man, it is capable of the greatest punishment. And the more intelligent and refined the soul, the more sensibly will the punishment be felt."—*John Bate.*

*d Horace Mann.*

*a* Ps. ix. 15, xxxv. 7, 8; Pr. xxviii. 10.

*b* Ro. xi. 2.

*c* "Judgment, now so much abused by an ungodly magistracy, shall turn back and again link itself with its fitting companion, impartial equity. All those 'upright in heart' shall hail the change with joy."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 12. *J. Farmer*, 220.

*vv.* 12, 13. *B. Newton*, ii. 317.

*a* Ps. xxxi. 18, cxv. 17.

*b* Ps. cxxxix. 23.

*v.* 18. *J. Wesley*, vi. 149.

wicked as God were not in earnest about His threatenings; 5. Conceits of the self-righteous.*c*

*Confidence for the future.*—A poor widow, who was supported principally by charity, told a Christian friend that she always spread her tablecloth and "gave thanks" if she had only a crust to eat. Beign asked what she did when she had nothing to eat, she beautifully replied, "*I thank God for what He is going to send me.*"—*Organs of sense.*—The nervous filaments of the senses are finer than a spider's thread: yet they are the avenues of communication between the world without and the world within. They spread themselves out over a little space at the roots of the tongue, and all the savours of nature become tributaries to our pleasure. They unfold themselves over a little space in the olfactory organs, and we catch the perfumes of all the zones. They are ramified over a little space in the hollow of the ear, and the myriad voices of nature, from the shrill insect or the mellifluous song-bird to the organ-tones of heaven's cathedral, the thunder, the cataract, and the ocean, become our orchestra. They line a spot in the interior of the eye so small that the tip of the finger may cover it; when, lo! the earth and the heavens, to the remotest constellations that seem to glitter feebly on the confines of space, are painted quick as thought in the chambers of the brain. By these senses, we hold connection with all external things, as though millions of telegraphic wires were stretched from every outward object, and came in converging lines to find their focus in our organs, and through these inlets to pour their pictures, their odours, and their songs into the all-capacious brain. Nay, better than this; for we have the picture, the perfume, and the music, without the encumbrance of the wires.*d*

12—15. (12) **thou chastenest**, comp. He. xii. 5—9. (13) **rest**, safety fr. the evil times. **until**, the word thus rendered denotes the "inevitableness" of the doom reserved for the wicked.*a* (14) **not forsake**, comp. Je. xii. 7.*b* (15) **judgment . . righteousness**, *i.e.* the disabilities under which the righteous now are placed, as Divine chastisement will presently issue in righteousness. Right will at last prevail, because God reigns. **follow it**, give in their adhesion to it.*c*

*Trust in God.*—As rowers in a boat turn their backs to the shore, and trust to the man at the helm, whose eye is fixed upon it, so should we proceed in duty through life,—turn our backs from our anxious cares for the future, and leave the guidance of them all to God, who guides the helm. Do thy part with industry and leave the event with God. I have seen matters fall out so unexpectedly that they have taught me in all affairs neither to despair nor to presume: not to despair, for God can help me; not to presume, for God can cross me. I will never despair, because I have a God; I will never presume, because I am but a man.

16—19. (16) **who**, among men. Because he found no help in man, the Psalmist turns wholly to God. (17) **dwelt in silence**, that of the grave.*a* (18) **when . . said**, or thought I had said, in time of danger. (19) **thoughts**, lit. *branching thoughts*, so meaning "anxious ones," cares, distractions.*b*

*A common incident of the journey* (*v.* 18).—I. Some slippery

places, as—1. Poverty and want; 2. Annoyance and vexation; 3. Dejection and perplexity; 4. Sore bereavement and trial. II. Some things concerning the traveller, rendering these the more perilous. 1. The absence of the staff or negligence in its use; 3. Drowsiness; 4. Carelessness; 5. The lamp untrimmed.[c]

*The mercies of God.*—If thy soul would praise the Lord, forget not all His benefits. Recount with thyself what He hath done for the Church, for the State in which thou livest, for thyself in thy own person, in thy parents, in thy children, in thy soul, in thy body, in temporal, in eternal favours, corporal and spiritual. When thou hast cast up the account of thy debts, and seest how much praise is due to God, how unable thou art to pay this debt, here is thy remedy:—"Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise."[d]

20—23. (20) **throne of iniquity**, judgment-seat marked by iniquity; tribunal of wickedness. **fellowship**, connection or alliance. **by a law**, hiding their unrighteous doings under the sacred name of law. (21) **together**, in troops, like bands of brigands. **against the soul**, or life. (22) **rock**, *etc.*, Ps. xviii. 2. (23) **bring upon**, turn back upon. Righteous retribution is certain. **in . . wickedness**, better, by means of.

*The martyr saved.*—It is related, in the memoirs of the celebrated William Whiston, that a Protestant, in the days of Queen Mary, of the name of Barbar, was sentenced to be burned. He walked to Smithfield, was bound to the stake, the faggots were piled around him, and the executioner only waited the word of command to apply the torch. At this crisis, tidiugs came of the Queen's death; the officers were compelled to stay proceedings till the pleasure of Elizabeth should be known; and thus the life of the good man was spared, to labour, with some of his descendants, successfully in the service of the Lord Jesus and His Church.

## *PSALM THE NINETY-FIFTH.*

author,—unknown: LXX. attributes to David: see also Heb. iii. 7–11, iv. 3, 7

*An invitation to the worship of God.*

1—3. (1) **sing**, as so often in the Ps. meaning *exult*, or *shout joyfully*. The interest of Eastern music chiefly consists in the greatness of the noise.[a] **a joyful noise**, "a joy which runs beyond all words."[b] **rock of our salvation**, as Ps. lxxxix. 26, xciv. 22. (2) **come before**, go forth to meet Him; *i.e.* anticipate His presence.[c] **thanksgiving**, the offering wh. God specially desires, Ps. l. 23. (3) **Lord**, or Jehovah. **God**, Heb. *el*, denoting God's strength. **all gods**, idols of the heathen.

*The joys of holy worship.*—How sweet are the discoverics made by Christ to believing souls! What a pleasant thing is it for spiritual eyes to behold the Sun of Righteousness, moving and shining in the spirit of a convert, as in its own proper sphere. Such as are dark, are accounted melancholy rooms: well may they be melancholy souls that want the cheering of Christ! Blessed are the people, O Lord, that walk in the light of Thy countenance; they shall know the joyful sound; they shall enjoy a continual jubilee in their hearts.[d]

4, 5. (4) **in his hand**, Heb. *He, in whose hand.* **deep places**, mysteries of the unexplored recesses. Geology now reads but a very little of these mysteries. **strength . . also,**



*v.* 19. *W. Strong*, 541; *Dr. T. Horton*, 159; *J. Norris*, iii. 131; *R. Reyner*, 329; *F. Carmichael*, 81; *Dr. H. Stebbing*, i. 20; *Bp. Sherlock*, ii. 37; *S. Perrott*, 157; *W. Gilpin*, i. 168; *Dr. W. Bell*, i. 113; *R. Hall*, v. 307; *Hon. G. C. Perceval*, ii. 98.

*c Stems and Twigs.*
*d S. Page* (1646).

*v.* 22. *T. Buckridge*, 61.

"If the globe were one mass of the purest gold; if the stars were so many jewels of the finest order; if the moon were a diamond; and the sun a ruby; they were less than nothing, when compared with the infinite valne of one soul."—*Brooksbank.*

*a* "The Psalmist shows that the outward worship of God consists not in dead ceremonies, but chiefly in the sacrifice of praise."—*Calvin.*
*b Augustine.*
*c Syk. Com.*
*d J. Arrowsmith* (1647).

*a Delitzsch.*

"His power reaches from the

loftiest summits of the mountains to the lowest depths of earth, and embraces the liquid expanse of the sea as well as the solid continents of land."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* Je. v. 22; Jno. i, 3.

*v.* 5. *Bp. Horne*, iii. 63.

*c Dr. Payson.*

*a* Comp. Ge. xii. 2; De. xxxii. 15; 1 Sa. xii. 6.

*b Perowne.*

*c* "Often as they were faithless, the 'to-day' sounded ever anew, for the 'gifts and calling of God are without repentance.'"—*Tholuck.*

*d* "As at Meribah; as in the day of Massah." See Ex. xviii. 1–7; Nu. xx. 1—13.

*e Dr. Whichcote* (1690).

*v.* 6. *Bp. Atterbury*, i. 101; *W. Vickers*, 206; *G. Carr*, ii. 132; *J. Riddock*, iii. 365.

*v.* 7. *L. Sterne*, vi. 125.

*vv.* 7, 8. *H. Wharton*, i. 313; *Dr. W. Hopkins*, 285.

*vv.* 7–9. *R. W. Telf*, 149.

*v.* 8. *Dr. Grant*, i. 106; *F. H. Hutton*, 108; *G. Moberly*, ii. 283.

*f P. S. Duval.*

"If self-knowledge be a path to virtue, virtue is a much better one to self-knowledge. The more pure the soul becomes, it will, like certain pre-

*the heights of the hills;* or trans., "To whom belong the tops of the mountains."[a] (5) **the sea is his**, or whose is the sea. To whom belongeth the sea. **formed the dry**, Ge. i. 9.[b]

*The sea and the Bible.*—We contemplate with no ordinary degree of interest a rock which has braved for centuries the ocean's rage, practically saying, "Hitherto shalt thou come, but no farther; and here shall thy proud waves be stayed." With still greater interest, though of a somewhat different kind, should we contemplate a fortress which during thousands of years had been constantly assaulted by successive generations of enemies; around whose walls millions had perished; and to overthrow which the utmost efforts of human force had been exerted in vain. Such a rock, such a fortress we contemplate in the Bible. Like the burning bush, it has ever been in the flames, yet it is still unconsumed; a sufficient proof, were there no other, that He who dwelt in the bush preserves the Bible.[c]

6—8. (6) **worship**, the word used to indicate lowly prostration, according to the Eastern mode of adoration: prostrate the body, and bow the head. **kneel**, the attitude of reverent supplication. **our Maker**, including the covenant making of Israel into a nation as well as the original act of creation.[a] (7) **our God**, a strong affirmation of the claim arising out of God's *personal* relation to His covenanted people. **people . . hand**, "the subject of comparison and the figure are blended together."[b] **to-day**,[c] this day: now, the accepted time. (8) **provocation**, the proper names Meribah and Massah should have been retained.[d]

*The difference of times* (*v.* 7).—The following times are not alike. I. Sooner or later in respect to eternity. II. Times of ignorance and knowledge. III. Before and after contracting evil habits. IV. Before and after voluntary commission of known sin. V. The times of God's gracious visitation, and when He withdraws Himself. VI. Times of health and sickness. VII. Now and hereafter, present and future, this world and the world to come, are not alike.[e]

*Israel's murmurings.*—This passage may also be translated "Harden not your hearts, as at Meribah, and as in the day of Massah in the wilderness:" and if so understood, we have one remarkable occasion of Israel's murmurings brought before us: for it refers us at once to that occasion when the conduct of Israel gave names to the place whereat they murmured against God, for, he called the place Massah and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, because they tempted the Lord, "saying, Is the Lord among us or not?"[f]—*A useful fault-finder.*—In a certain town in Massachusetts there was a man, several years since, who seemed to be a bold leader of all opposition to religion, and always ready to publish abroad any delinquencies which might be discovered in any professor of religion. At length he made up his mind to remove from the place to another part of the country. Meeting the pastor of the Congregational Church one day, he said, after passing the usual salutation: "Well, I suppose you know that I am going to leave town soon, and *you* will probably be glad of it." "Glad of it? Why no," said the minister; "you are one of our most useful men, and I think I shall hardly know how to spare you." Taken aback, somewhat, by such a reply, he immediately asked, "How is that?" "Why," rejoined the minister, "there can't be a sheep that gets

this fold, but what you will always bark from one end of the town to the other. I think you have really been one of the most useful watch-dogs that I ever knew." The remaining conversation we will not repeat; but there seemed to be an idea too good to be lost, in reference to the *usefulness* of some wicked men, who are always disposed to find fault with the Church. They may often exert some restraining influence, and do good in that way, when they do not intend to. David recognised this kind of usefulness, when he said, "I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue; I will keep my mouth with a bridle, while the wicked is before me" (Ps. xxxix. 1). If the Lord has bid them curse, why should they not finish their work? The reward of such a kind of usefulness may, indeed, differ from that of those who really love to honour God in what they do; but *that*, God will surely see to in the end, so that no injustice shall be done them.[g]

9—11. (9) **tempted**, in the sense of tested, assayed. Since God rightly calls for trust, any testing of Him, as if He could fail, is a dishonour to Him. The word *Massah* means *trial*. **work**, of judgment. (10) **with this generation**, or, with a whole generation. **people**, *etc.*, lit. "a people of wanderers in heart (are) they." (11) **they shall not**, or in the usual form of an oath in Heb. "If they shall enter."[a] **my rest**, the land of promise.[b]

*Israel's provocation and punishment* (*vv.* 10, 11).—I. The conduct of Israel. 1. Ignorance is not always criminal; 2. When the means of knowing are at hand, then ignorance is criminal; 3. Error was another of their crimes. II. The effect produced by this conduct. 1. God takes cognisance of human conduct; 2. The ignorant and erroneous conduct of men is highly offensive to God; 3. God exercises long patience with His creatures. III. The punishment which this conduct merited. 1. Notwithstanding God's forbearance, continuance of crime must ultimately produce the infliction of punishment; 2. Israel's punishment was deprivation of rest; 3. The language in which the threatening is expressed leads us to reflect on the terrible doom of its subjects.[c]

*A common mistake.*—Lord, I do discover a fallacy, whereby I have long deceived myself. Which is this: I have desired to begin my amendment from my birthday, or from the first day of the year, or from some eminent festival, that so my repentance might bear some remarkable date. But when those days were come, I have adjourned my amendment to some other time. Thus, whilst I could not agree with myself when to start, I have almost lost the running of the race. I am resolved thus to befool myself no longer. I see no day but to-day: the instant time is always the fittest time. In Nebuchadnezzar's image, the lower the members, the coarser the metal; the farther off the time, the more unfit. To-day is the golden opportunity; to-morrow will be the silver season; next day but the brazen one, and so on, till at last I shall come to the toes of clay, and be turned to dust. Grant, therefore, that to-day I may hear Thy voice. And if this day be obscure in the calendar and remarkable in itself for nothing else, give me to make it memorable in my soul thereupon, by Thy assistance, beginning the reformation of my life.[d]

cious stones that are sensible to the contact of poison, shrink from the fœtid vapours of evil impressions."—*Richter.*

*g Horace Mann.*

*a* "This elliptical form of the oath is equivalent to a strong negative."—*Perowne.*

*b* He. iii. 18, iv. 3, 8—11.

*c Beta* in 400 Sks.

*v.* 10. *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 52.

*v.* 11. *Dr. South*, ix. 39; *F. D. Maurice, P. Book*, 66.

"Five persons were studying what were the best means to mortify sin; one said, to meditate on death; the second, to meditate on judgment; the third, to meditate on the joys of heaven; the fourth, to meditate on the torments of hell; the fifth, to meditate on the blood and sufferings of Jesus Christ; and certainly the last is the choicest and strongest motive of all."—*Brooks.*

*d T. Fuller.*

## PSALM THE NINETY-SIXTH.

author,—unknown: prob. date, immediately after the captivity

*A call to all nations to praise God.*

1—3. (1) new song, one referring to the future.[a] New in the sense of suiting the glorious age that is dawning. (2) from day to day, *i.e.* every day. (3) heathen, or Gentile peoples. all people, or all the nations.[b]

*The duty of making Christ known to the heathen* (*vv.* 1—3).—I. Point out your duty to the Lord Jesus Christ. 1. We should praise Him ourselves; 2. We should make Him known to others. II. Call you to the performance of it. Consider—1. Your obligations to the Saviour: 2. The necessities of the heathen world. Address—(1) Those who are lukewarm in the cause of Christ; (2) Those who are active in His service.[c]

*A prayer for Christ's kingdom.*—"O most glorious and powerful Jesus, who with Thine own right hand and Thy holy arm hast gotten to Thyself, on our behalf, the victory over sin, hell, and the grave; remember this Thy mercy and truth, which Thou hast promised to all that believe on Thee: give us pardon of our sins sealed unto us by the testimony of Thy Holy Spirit, and of a good conscience; and grant that we by Thy strength may fight against our ghostly enemies, and by Thy power may overcome them, that we may rejoice in a holy peace, and sing and give Thee thanks for our victory and our crown. Extend this mercy, and enlarge the effect of Thy great victories to the heathen, that all the ends of the world may sing a new song unto Thee, and see the salvation of God; that when Thou comest to judge the earth we may all find mercy, and be joyful together before Thee in the festivity of a blessed eternity, through Thy mercies, O blessed Saviour and Redeemer, Jesus. Amen."[d]

4—6. (4) great, Ps. xlviii. 1. praised, *i.e.* celebrated in festive songs. all gods, the heathen deities.[a] (5) idols, Heb. *elilim*, nothings.[b] made the heavens, therefore is the one living Creator. (6) sanctuary, should be "in his place."[c] The term sanctuary may be referred to the temple.

*Strength and beauty* (*v.* 6).—They meet in the sanctuary of God in undivided perfection. I. There is the strength and beauty of attraction. II. Of an unflinching purpose—to reign, save, judge. III. Of a perfect organisation. IV. Of imparted character.[d]

*The gods of the nations.*—The knowledge of one God, the Creator and Governor, communicated to Adam in Paradise, renewed to Noah in the ark, was handed down by tradition, or by written records, to all mankind. The grand central truth,—the being of a God, was simple, clear, impressive; and it was therefore retained. But His nature, and the nature of the worship acceptable to Him, were gradually lost sight of as man wandered farther and farther from direct supernatural teaching. Business engrossed his thoughts, pleasures captivated his mind, passions and lusts dulled his moral principles; and in the end, his nobler part, the spiritual, was neglected, and man became a sensualist in his religion as well as in his acts. The idea of a purely spiritual, omnipresent God could not be realised: hence man came to localise his God, and embody Him in such objects as appeared greatest and grandest. The sun was the first representative of

*a* "A new song; for here are set forth expectations strange to the Jewish creed of former days, and God's intention 'that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise,' begins to dawn upon the exclusive nation."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Mat. xvi. 15.

*c* *C. Simeon, M.A.*

See *St. Augustine*, Op. vii. 143.

*d* *Jeremy Taylor.*

*a* "These are called *idols*, lit. *nothings*, a favourite word in Is., *see* Ch. xli., xliv., but occurring also as early as Le xix. 4, xxvi. 1."—*Perowne.*

*b* 1 Cor. viii. 4.

*c* 1 Chr. xvi. 27.

*d* *H. T. Miller.*

*vv.* 6—9. *T. Bowdler*, i. 332.

Maurice in his *Indian Antiquities* refers thus to the worship practised by the British Druids:—"The pen of history trembles to relate the baleful orgies which their frantic superstition celebrated, when, en-

Deity. It was not strange he should be so. He is the source of light, heat, and vitality. He is the most glorious object in creation. Then the moon, the beautiful queen of night, was selected as an object of worship. At first it was not supposed that either the sun or the moon was actually God. The idea was that God manifested His glory in an especial manner in and through them. This was a step, but only a step, on the way to absolute idolatry.*c*—*The weakness of idols.*—A little boy who lived in the house of a heathen said to him one day: "There is but one God—the one who made the earth, and the sky, and everything. It is He who gives us the rain and the sunshine, and He knows what we do and what we leave undone. He hears us when we pray, and He the Eternal One, will punish us if we do wrong, and reward us if we do right. He can save us or He can destroy us. But these images that you pray to are only lumps of baked clay. They can't see or hear; how, then, can they do you any good or save you from any trouble? You ought to talk to God's messenger about that." He meant the missionary. The heathen paid no heed to him, but soon afterwards went on a little journey. While he was gone, the boy took a stick and broke all the images except the largest, into the hands of which he put the stick. When the man returned, he was furious to see what had happened, and exclaimed: "Who has done this?" "Perhaps said the little boy, "the big idol has been beating his little brothers." "Nonsense," said the man. "Don't talk such stuff as that! Do you think I'm a fool? You know as well I do that the thing cannot even raise its hand. It was you, you little rascal! It was you! And to pay you for your labour of wickedness, I'll beat you to death with the same stick." And seizing the stick, he approached him. "But," said the boy gently, "how can you trust to a god so weak that a child's hand can destroy him? Do you suppose that, if he can't take care of himself or his companions, he can of you and the world, let alone *making* you?" The heathen stopped to think, for it was a new idea. Then he broke his great idol, and went and kneeled down to pray to the true God, and called Him "My Father."*f*

7–10. (7) kindreds, *etc.*, the Gentile nations are thus addressed.*a* give, *etc.*, ascribe in joyful, trustful songs. (8) bring an offering,*b* *minchah*, an unbloody sacrifice. courts, this expression indicates the existence of the temple at the date of the Psalm. (9) beauty of holiness, or "in holy vestments."*c* (10) Lord reigneth, or Jehovah is King: "hath taken to Himself His great power and reigned." world, *etc.*, Ps. xciii. 1. judge, in the general sense of ruling.

*The nature and spirit of Divine worship* (*vv.* 8, 9).—I. Religion is essentially connected with worship. II. Divine worship must be personal. III. Personal worship must be public. IV. Holy. V. Adoring and grateful. VI. In the spirit of cheerful liberality. 1. The offerings may be of varied amount; 2. Cheerful and voluntary; 3. Continuous; 4. Grounds of the offering.*d*

*Moral effects of worship.*—To the heathen divinities, especially those placed at the head of the catalogue as the superior gods, what theologians have called the physical attributes of deity—omnipotent and omnipresent power—were generally ascribed; but their moral character was always defective, and generally criminal. As one of the best instances in the whole mythology

closing men, women, and children in one vast wicker image in the form of a man, and filling it with every kind of combustibles, they set fire to the huge figure. While the dreadful holocaust was offering to their sanguinary gods, the groans and shrieks of the consuming victims were drowned amidst shouts of barbarous triumph; and the air was rent, as in the Syrian temple of old, with martial music.

*e Dr. Porter.*

"Dagon could not stand before the ark of the covenant; no more can idols before the power of Christianity." —*John Bate.*

*f Schmidt.*

*a* "The families of the nations themselves are called upon to take up the song in wh. Israel has made known to them the salvation of Jehovah." —*Perowne.*

*b* "A collective singular, in allusion to the Eastern custom of bringing gifts when admitted into the presence of kings and rulers." —*Spk. Com.*

In Madagascar now, every person entering the presence of the sovereign makes *kasina*, or a present.

of the ancients, the Roman Jupiter might be cited. Had a medal been struck of this best of the gods, on one side might have been engraved Almightiness, Omnipresence, Justice; and, on the reverse, Caprice, Vengeance, Lust. Thus men clothed depraved or bestial deities with almighty power; and they became cruel or corrupt or bestial in their affections, by the reaction of the character worshipped upon the character of the worshipper. In the language of a recent writer, "They clothed the beasts and depraved beings with the attributes of almightiness, and, in effect, they worshipped almighty beasts and devils." And the more they worshipped, the more they resembled them.[e]

11—13. (11) heavens rejoice, in this, and foll. verses, inanimate creation is summoned to take part in the joyful strain.[a] sea roar, as if in a loud psalm. field, *etc.*, by reason of the prosperities of the righteous reign. trees . . rejoice, a bold, poetic figure. (13) cometh, better, He is come: "the coming seems as if it were actually taking place under the eyes of the Psalmist."

*The temple of creation.*—

Your voiceless lips, O flowers, are living preachers,
Each cup a pulpit, every leaf a book,
Supplying to my fancy numerous teachers
From loneliest nook.

'Neath cloister'd boughs each floral bell that swingeth,
And tolls its perfume on the passing air,
Makes Sabbath in the fields, and ever ringeth
A call to prayer,—

Not to the domes where crumbling arch and column
Attest the feebleness of mortal hand,
But to that fane most catholic and solemn
Which God hath planned.—

To that cathedral, boundless as our wonder,
Whose quenchless lamps the sun and moon supply,
Its choir the winds and waves, its organ thunder,
Its dome the sky.

There, amid solitude and shade, I wander
Through the green aisles, and, stretch'd upon the sod,
Amid the silence reverently ponder
The ways of God.[b]

## *PSALM THE NINETY-SEVENTH.*

author,—unknown

*Subj., the awful sovereignty of Jehovah.*

1—4. (1) reigneth, or is now king. Reference is prob. to the restoration of the theocracy after the time of the captivity.[a] isles, terms used for the islands and coasts of the Medit. Sea, or in a wider sense of heathen countries.[b] (2) clouds, *etc.*, fig. taken from giving of law on Mt. Sinai.[c] habitation, marg. *establishment*; support, or pillars, Ps. lxxxix. 14. (3) a fire, better, *fire*, the Divine symbol, Ps. l. 3.[d] (4) enlightened, *lit.* "gave shine unto."

*God's reign matter of joy to all* (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. That all things are under the control of the Lord Jehovah. II. Some parts of this Divine administration are mysterious and incomprehensible

*c Delitzsch* comp. with the "wedding garment" of the N. T. parable.
*d Dr. J. Burns.* v. 8. *G. Burnet*, i. 249.
v. 9. *Dr. W. Vincent*, ii. 375; *E. W. Clarke*, 152.
*e J. B. Walker.*

*a* Comp. Is. xliv. 23.

*vv.* 11—13. *T. Bowdler*, i. 383; *Lord A. Hervey*, i. 37.

"To be in heaven is to love for ever God — and thou must love here. Here thou wilt find all that thou canst and oughtst to love; for souls, re-made of God, and moulded over again into His sunlike emblems, multiply His might and love; the saved are suns, not earths; and with original glory shine of God."—*Bailey.*

"See the morning star breaks from the east to tell the world her great eye is awaked."—*Lewis Machin.*

*b Longfellow.*

*a* "All the verbs from 1—9, whether in the past or future, must be regarded as *prophetic perfects*; to the sanguine imagina-

to man. III. That righteousness and judgment are the habitation of His throne. IV. That Jehovah's reign is matter of joy to all.[e]—*Same subject.*—I shall consider the Divine government in various views, as legislative, providential, mediatorial, and judicial; and show that in each of these views the Divine government is matter of universal joy.[f]

*God in creation.*—

The gentle music of His voice
Stirred thro' my heart-strings like a wind thro' reeds.
He said, "It was God's hand that shaped the world,
And laid it in the sunbeams;" and that "God
With His great presence fills the universe;
That could we dwell like night among the stars,
Or plunge with whales in the unbounded sea,
He still would be around us with His care."
And also—"That, as flowers come back in Spring,
We would live after death." I heard no more![g]

*Poetry in nature.*—Poetry has been called the art of feigning; but all who have ever looked into things know it is much rather the art of revealing: for there is not a leaf or a line in the volume of creation, but would be most excellent poetry if faithfully translated; and all good poems are but such translations. There is no wind so vulgar but it may be turned into music; all the fragrances of Paradise are sleeping in the dullest clod; and out of the commonest sunbeams may be drawn the colours of the rainbow. Poetry, indeed, is a universal presence, though not to be discerned by us except it be alive within us: it is in our breath, it is under our feet; it nestles here, it whispers there; it springs up from the cradle, hovers round the altar, watches at the tomb; it has its

"Dwelling in the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean, and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man."

In a word, it is the impassioned expression, the breathing eloquence which is in the face of all nature; but it takes "the vision and the faculty divine" to give it an understanding and a tongue. In the hands of genius, the driest stick becomes an Aaron's rod, and buds and blossoms out in poetry. Is he a Burns? the sight of a mountain daisy unseals the fountains of his nature, and he embalms the "bonny gem" in the beauty of his spirit. Is he a Wordsworth? at his touch all nature is instinct with feeling; the spirit of beauty springs up in the footsteps of his going, and the darkest, nakedest grave becomes a sunlit bank empurpled with blossoms of life.

5—7. (5) wax, *see* Ps. lxviii. 2.[a] Lord . . earth, Jos. iii. 11, 13.[b] (6) heavens declare, bec. God is regarded as appearing in the heavens, and judging therefrom. people, peoples, or nations.[c] (7) confounded, by the glorious manifestation of the true God. worship . . gods, better rendered, "all the gods prostrate themselves before Him."

*Naturalists and deists.*—Many are naturalists and deists. They do not worship in our sense of the term. They attempt to obey natural law, and they tell you that obedience to natural law is the only worship of which they know anything. Society is full of such men nowadays. They believe in a first cause, they

tion of the Psalmist the kingdoms of this world are already become the kingdom of Jehovah."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Ge. x. 5; Ps. lxxii. 10; Is. xlii. 4, xlix. 1, li. 5, lx. 9, lxvi. 19; Zep. ii. 11.

*c* Ex. xix. 9—16, xx. 21.

*d* Comp. Ha. iii. 5,

*e Iota* in 400 Sks.

*f Pres. Davis, M.A.*

"The truest characters of ignorance are vanity, and pride, and arrogance; as blind men use to bear their noses higher than those who have their eyes and sight entire."—*Butler.*

*g Alex. Smith.*

"The stars are mansions built by Nature's hand, and, haply, there the spirits of the blest dwell, clothed in radiance, their immortal rest."—*Wordsworth.*

*a* "The frequent allusions in this series of Ps. to the convulsions of the earth, and the melting of the hills, suggest the idea that some great earthquake, like that in the days of King Uzziah, was fresh in the memory of the people."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Mi. iv. 13; Zec. iv. 14, vi. 5.

*c* Is. xl. 5, lxvi. 18, *r.* 7. *Bp. Horsley.* 223.

"Her fruits are all balmy and sweet; she affords none of those blighted ones, so common in the life of man, and so like the fabled apples or the Dead Sea, fresh and beautiful to the sight, but when tasted, full of bitterness and ashes."—*Sir Humphry Davy.* "Every act of the man inscribes itself in the memories of its fellows, and in his own manners and face. The air is full of sounds, the sky of tokens, the ground is all memoranda and signatures, and every object covered over with hints, which speak to the intelligent."—*Emerson.*

believe in an architect, they believe in a superintending God of nature, they believe that His edicts are written in natural law, and they believe that the service required is simply to obey natural laws. And all emotional experiences, and sentiments of rapture, and gushes of veneration and love, they are accustomed to call fancies, which, though they may be amiable and poetic, are after all more or less in the nature of superstitions. They gaze towards the great invisible, and some of them are wistful, and long to know more than they do: but their wistfulness, their longing, is like that which children have that look in the evening at the stars, and wonder what they are made of, and what there is in them. There are thousands that look away to the great bright centre of creation, whose God is, after all, but a distant and an unknown star. Even this view has its eclipses of doubt, for men of a great deal of thoughtfulness of one kind find themselves uncertain as to whether to believe in a personal God at all, or not. They believe in that which we may call a personal God, but whether it is a great thinking power, whether it is clothed with affections, or whether there is a cohesion of qualities and of attributes round about some central core, so as to make God in the divinity what man is in the individual, they are very much in doubt. There is a universe of laws; but is the sum of these laws anything more than simply power? or is God any more than power? How He came, how that power was generated, or how it continues, they know not. But they say that neither do we know a thousand things about God as we conceive of Him. And so they vibrate between a God of a physical administration, and an impersonal God.

8, 9. (8) **Zion . . glad,** that coming of Jehovah who was a terror to the worshippers of idols, was a triumphant joy to His own people.[a] **daughters of Judah,** poetic fig. for the towns of wh. Jerus. was the mother city. (9) **art high,** Ps. lxxxiii. 18.

*The exalted God.*—You see the shadow of the heavens in a lake. But the heavens that look out of that placid water do not seem very deep; the shadow of heaven is shallow because the heaven shadowed there is low. But when the low clouds have all passed away, look down then into the lake and tell what sight you see,—the heaven shadowed in the water is deep, like eternity now. When your joy in Christ's love does not rise high, your grief over the sins that crucified Him does not sink very deep. Hate of evil is shallow because love to Him is shallow. But when I live more by looking at Jesus Christ and what He has done for me, I shall grieve more over the plague of my own evil heart.[b]

"In the same spirit, our Lord, when speaking of the signs of fear which shall be the precursors of His second coming, says, Lu. xxi. 28."—*Peroune.*

*b W. Arnot.*

10—12. (10) **hate evil,** Ps. xxxiv. 14.[a] **saints,** this term does not in Scrip. mean absolutely holy ones; but is equal to our "*pious ones.*" (11) **light is sown,** *i.e.* scattered or diffused; strewn along the pathway of the righteous.[b] (12) **rejoice,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. xxxii. 11, xxx. 4. **remembrance,** *etc.*, or "give thanks to His holy memorial:" *i.e.* to His holy name (for God's memorial is His name Jehovah, Ex. iii. 15).

*Seed from God's store-house* (r. 11).—I. The seed. 1. The quality of it,—"whatever doth make manifest is light;" 2. The idea of increase. II. The sowing. 1. God the first to scatter it; 2. Sown by the righteous, for themselves, and others; 3.

*a* Comp. Job i. 1; Am. v. 15; Ro. xii. 9.

*b* But compare the foll. use of the poetic figure:—"Now morn, her rosy steps in th' Eastern clime advancing, sow'd the earth with orient pearl."—*Milton.*

For the righteous by the wicked. III. The reapers,—the righteous.[c]

*Storing up light.*—Marvellous as it may appear, light can actually be bottled up for use. Take an engraving which has been kept for some days in the dark ; expose it to full sunshine —that is, insulate it—for fifteen minutes ; lay it on sensitive paper in a dark place, and at the end of twenty-four hours it will have left an impression of itself on the sensitive paper, the whites coming out as blacks. If insulated for a longer time, say an hour, till thoroughly saturated with sunlight, the image will appear much more distinct. Thus there seems to be no limit to the reproduction of engravings. Take a thin tube lined with white, let the sun shine into it for an hour, place it erect on sensitive paper, and it will give the impression of a ring, or reproduce the image of a small engraving and a variety of objects at pleasure,—feathers, figured glass, porcelain, for example. Take, moreover, a sheet of paper which has been thoroughly exposed to the sun, seal it up hermetically in a dark tube, and the paper will retain the light so effectually that after two weeks, perhaps longer, it may be used for taking photographs.[d]

## *PSALM THE NINETY-EIGHTH.*

**1.** (1) **new song,** the new feature being the share of the Gentiles in the worship of Jehovah. **gotten,** *etc.,* lit. "hath helped Him."[a]

*Worship to profit.*—A minister in Ireland was preaching from this text, when there came into the church a little, ragged, pale-faced boy. He sat near the pulpit, and seemed to drink in God's truth. Next Sunday he came again, but after that the minister missed him. Two months passed, when, late one night, an Irishman knocked at his door, and said, "Oh, sir, come away to my little boy ; he is very ill ; but he heard ye preach, and he wants to see ye." The minister said, "I will come in the morning." "Oh, but plase your riverence, the morning will be too late ; ye must come to-night, for he is dying." He followed the man two miles across the moors, till they came to a solitary hut. He entered, and in a corner, on some straw, lay his little hearer, sadly worse, and very near death. The boy recognised the minister, pressed his hand, and, while he raised the other thin little one to heaven, whispering, "His right hand, and His holy arm, hath gotten Him the victory," his happy spirit passed away to his Saviour's home.

**2, 3.** (2) **righteousness,** parallel with *salvation,*[a] a term used in the later portion of Isaiah. (3) **mercy and truth,** or loving-kindness and faithfulness on behalf of. "The two attributes expressive of God's *covenant relationship* to His people." "He has recalled His promise of showing peculiar peace to Israel."[b]

*A Messianic pæan.*—The swelling melody of Ps. xcviii. is set to the key of "Glory to God in the highest!" If the prophetic eye were not resting on the Messianic advent and the marvellous things of later times, such lyric raptures would be extravagant. This outburst is suited alike to the advent at Bethlehem, and to

"The verb used here generally denotes a sowing (literal or metaphorical) of seed in the ground, with a view, that is, to harvest. And this signif. is appropriate here." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c T. Kelly, M.A.*

*v.* 10. *W. F. Vance,* 183 ; *F. French,* 141 ; *Bp. Wordsworth,* ii. 274.

*v.* 11. *T. Gataker,* i. 175 ; *Dr. J. Edwards,* iii. 604 ; *D. Wilcox,* ii. 88.

*v.* 12. *Bp. Smallridge,* 190 ; *H. Grove,* iii. 233.

*d Prof. Grove.*

author,—unknown

*Subj., the whole creation invited to praise. Comp. Ps.* xcvi.

*a* Comp. Is. **lix.** 16, lxiii. 5.

"God hath gotten victory over the power of Bab., wh. laid His temple in the dust, but wh. He had now chastised by the arms of Cyrus, whom He had made His instrument in restoring His people, and laying again the foundations of His temple."—*Wordsworth.*

*a* "The connection of *right,* with *salv.* is obvious enough, since, even in our sense of the term, righteousness wh. brings to every one his own must bring to the people of the Lord salvation."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

the later advent in clouds. There is, too, a recurring occasion for this lofty hymn one's life long, in every fresh discovery of our Lord's righteousness, and onward till the end of time. The humblest, loneliest believer belongs equally to the choir.

4—6. (4) make . . praise, rend. "Break forth into rejoicing, and play."[a] (5) harp, Ge. iv. 21. voice of a psalm, Is. li. 3. (6) cornet, Heb. *shophâr*, ram's horn. A joyful shout was often accompanied, and swelled by, a blast of trumpets, or rams' horns.[b]

*A hymn on the creation.*—

No power can justly praise Him, but must be
As great, as infinite as He ;
He comprehends His boundless self alone :
Created minds too shallow are and dim
His works to fathom, much more Him.
Our praise at height will be
Short by a whole infinity
Of His all-glorious Deity :
He cannot have the full and stands in need of none.

How large thy empire, Love, how great thy sway !
Omnipotence does thee obey.
What complicated wonders in thee shine !
He that t' Infinity itself is great
Has one way to be greater yet ;
Love will the method show—
'Tis to impart ; what is 't that thou,
O Sovereign Passion, canst not do?
Thou mak'st Divinity itself much more divine.[c]

7—9. (7) sea, *etc.*, comp. Ps. xcvi. 11, 12. world, *etc.*, Ps. xxiv. 1. (8) clap their hands, bold metaphor taken fr. Is. lv. 12. Clapping the hands was, and is still, an expression of satisfaction and joy. (9) before, *etc.*, Ps. xcvi. 13.

*The beneficence of the Creator.*—Wherever we turn our eyes, in the world around us, we behold innumerable instances of our Creator's beneficence. In order that the eye and the imagination may be gratified and charmed, He has spread over the surface of our terrestrial habitation an assemblage of the richest colours, which beautify and adorn the landscape of the earth, and present to our view a picturesque and diversified scenery, which is highly gratifying to the principle of novelty implanted in the human mind. On all sides we behold a rich variety of beauty and magnificence. Here, spread the wide plains and fertile fields, adorned with fruits and verdure ; there, the hills rise in gentle slopes, and the mountains rear their snowy tops to the clouds, distilling from their sides the brooks and rivers, which enliven and fertilise the plains through which they flow. Here, the lake stretches into a smooth expanse in the bosom of the mountains ; there, the rivers meander through the forests and the flowery fields, diversifying the rural scene, and distributing health and fertility in their train. Here, we behold the rugged cliffs, and the stately part of the forest ; there, we are charmed with the verdure of the meadow, the enamel of the flowers, the azure of the sky, and the gay colouring of the morning and evening clouds. In order that this scene of beauty and magnificence might be rendered visible, He formed the element of light,

*b* Is. xlix. 6, lii. 10; Lu. i. 54, 55, 68—70, 72, ii. 30, 31; Ac. xiii. 46, 47.

*a Delitzsch.*

Is. lii. 9.

"The word used here prob. denotes sounds made with the mouth, as distinguished fr. instrumental music."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* 1 Chr. xv. 28; 2 Chr. xxix. 27.

*v.* 6. *W. Jones*, vi. 110.

*c Norris.*

"Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising through the mellow shade, glitter like a swarm of fireflies tangled in a silver braid."—*Tennyson.*

*v.* 9. *Dr. J. Duchal*, 404.

"As, when men behold any curious work of a skilful craftsman, straightway they will leave the work, and inquire after him that made it, that they may praise his skill ; so it is the duty of Christians, when they behold everywhere in all the creatures the admirable and unspeakable wisdom, goodness, and power of God, to make haste from the creature, and go forward to the Creator to praise and glorify Him."—*Cawdray.*

"To count their numbers were to count the sands that ride in

without which the expanse of the universe would be a boundless desert, and its beauties for ever veiled from our sight. It opens to our view the mountains, the hills, the valleys, the woods, the lawns, the flocks and herds, the wonders of the mighty deep, and the radiant orbs of heaven. It paints a thousand different hues on the objects around us, and promotes a cheerful and extensive intercourse among all the nations of the globe.[a]

whirlwinds the parched Lybian air."—*Armstrong.*

*a Dr. Dick.*

## *PSALM THE NINETY-NINTH.*

author,—unknown: the last of the series of royal Psalms

1—4. (1) **Lord reigneth,** *see* Ps. xciii. 1, xcvii. 1. **let,** omit the word *let*. **tremble,** or are angry, agitated. **cherubim,** Ps. lxxx. 1.[a] **let . . moved,** or, "the earth is moved." (2) **great in Zion,** by reason of some recent exhibition of His power and grace. (3) **let them,** the nations, or peoples, of *v.* 2. **it is holy,** or "He is holy."[b] (4) **king's strength,** better rend. "And the strength of a king who loveth judgment Thou hast established."[c]

*Subj., praise of the Thrice Holy One.*

*a* Ex. xxv. 22.

*b* "God's name is God Himself in His revealed holiness."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* "And the might of a king who loveth the right hast Thou established in righteousness."—*Delitzsch.*

*Holy aspiration.*—

Spirit of Life! with Thy pure love inspire
My longing spirit as it upward turns.—
Kindle and nurse to strength the heavenly fire
Which in my penitence so feebly burns.

Let love the law to all my being give,
Love its continual aspiration be,—
To love—to love—this is indeed to live,
Thou God of Love, O breathe this life in me![d]

*v.* 1. *C. Kingsley,* 180.

*d Prof. Vinet.*

5—9. (5) **footstool,** the lower part or step of the king's throne.[a] (6) **call . . name,** *i.e.* who were men of worship and prayer.[b] (7) **spake,** *etc.*, this specially refers to Moses and Aaron; but direct Divine communications were also given to Samuel. **kept his testimonies,** such obedience alone could make their worship acceptable. (8) **forgavest them,** pardoning their sin, but not removing the judgment that they should not enter the promised land. **inventions,** Eccl. vii. 29, contrivances dictated by *self-will*. (9) **at . . will,** or *towards*, Da. vi. 10.

*a* "Allusion may be to the great day of atonement, when the high priest, as the representative of the whole nation, carried the confessions and worship of the people, with the blood of the sacrifices, to the ark and its mercy seat."—*Spk. Com.* 1 Chr. xxviii. 2; Ps. cxxxii. 7.

*b* "The experience of these servants of God is cited for encouragement."—*Fausset.*

*v.* 6. *H. Goodwin,* iv. 145.

*v.* 8. *J. Hill,* 400; *T. Howe,* 66.

*v.* 9. *Whittier.*

*Holy worship.*—

He asks no taper lights, on high surrounding
The priestly altar and the saintly grave;
No dolorous chant nor organ music sounding,
Nor incense clouding up the twilight nave.

For he whom Jesus loved hath truly spoken:
The holier worship which He deigns to bless
Restores the lost, and binds the spirit-broken,
And feeds the widow and the fatherless!

Types of our human weakness and our sorrow!
Who lives unhaunted by his loved ones dead?
Who, with vain longing, seeketh not to borrow
From stranger eyes the home-lights which have fled.[e]

*c Whittier.*

## PSALM THE HUNDREDTH.

author,—unknown: date, after the captivity

*Subj., call of all the world to the service of the true God.*

"Among the Ps. of triumph and thanksgiving this stands pre-eminent, as rising to the highest point of joy and grandeur. No local restrictions, no national exclusiveness, can find place in the contemplation of God as the common Creator and Father of Man."—*Psalms chron. arranged.*

1—5. (1) make . . noise, raise a shout. Ps. xcviii. 4. all ye lands, the whole earth. (2) serve, comp. Ps. ii. 11. (3) know ye, *i.e.* learn by personal experience. made us, His people; not merely *created* us. not we ourselves, better, as marg., "His we are."[a] (4) be thankful,[b] *i.e.* express your thankfulness. (5) good, a term that blends righteousness and mercy. truth, or faithfulness to covenant and promise.

*Joyfulness of the service of God* (*v.* 2).—I. The obligation, duty, and privilege of thanksgiving. Our highest calling and work is to praise and bless God with our lips, our hearts, and our lives. II. Consider the reasons why we should serve the Lord with gladness. 1. He is our maker, supporter. God; 2. He is the author of reconciliation and redemption, and His rule is the rule of righteousness and love; 3. Because of the largeness, freeness, universality, unchangeableness of His love; 4. Because the very principles of service are a well-spring of life and gladness; 5. Because it is a reasonable service; 6. Because we thus most truly represent and heartily commend His Gospel and service unto men.[c]

*Looking at the clock.*—One Sabbath morning the Rev. Richard Watson, when engaged in preaching, had not proceeded far in his discourse when he observed an individual in a pew just before him rise from his seat, and turn round to look at the clock in front of the gallery, as if the service were a weariness to him. The unseemly act called forth the following rebuke: "A remarkable change," said the speaker, "has taken place among the people of this country in regard to the public service of religion. Our forefathers put their clocks on the outside of their places of worship, that they might not be too late in their attendance. We have transferred them to the inside of the house of God, lest we should stay too long in the service. A sad and ominous change!"

*a* Ez. xxxiv. 30, 31.
*b* Ps. cxvi. 17—19; Is. xxxv. 10; 1 Pe. ii. 9.
*c* *Watson Smith.* See *Dr. J. Boys*, 16; *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 215; *Dr. W. Wilson*, *Blooms. Lec.* vi. 168.
*v.* 1. *G. W. Woodhouse*, ii. 253; *R. W. Telf*, 265.
*v.* 3. *Dr. J. Duchal*, iii. 250; *J. Fawcett*, i. 23; *R. Morehead*, i. 389.

## PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FIRST.

author,—David: prob. date, 2 Sa. v. 7—9, or vi. 12—15.

*Subj., a monarch's pious resolutions.*

1—4. (1) mercy and judgment, these are properly only Divine attributes, but they can in measure be imitated by a king.[a] sing, or play to the harp. (2) behave, *etc.*, "take good heed to the way of integrity:" "conduct myself wisely and uprightly, in the path of innocence." come unto me, to aid me.[b] perfect heart, *i.e.* one thoroughly sincere. (3) wicked thing, *Heb.* "thong of Belial." Ps. xli. 8. marg. not cleave, they may come as temptations, but shall not be encouraged. (4) froward,[c] De. xxxii. 20. not know, have acquaintance with.

*A wise deportment delineated* (*v.* 2).—I. The great importance of it. 1. The peace and comfort of our own souls; 2. The benefit to all around us; 3. The honour of God and His Gospel. II. The way in which it must be carried into effect. 1. With meekness and modesty; 2. With kindness and charity; 3. With prudence and foresight; 4. With disinterestedness and simplicity. Directions—(1) Let a conformity to the dictates of this

*a* "He meditates on the mercy and righteousness of God, that he may learn the lesson of that mercy and righteousness himself."—*Peyrouse.*
*b* "When Thou shalt come unto me, and assist me, I will walk wisely

wisdom be your constant aim; (2) Pray earnestly to God to inspire you with it.[d]

*Calamity resulting in good.*—Amidst the dispensations of God's providence, mercy is frequently found associated with judgment. The Rev. Newman Hall, in a sermon on the Hartley Colliery accident, which took place in January last, and by which 204 miners lost their lives, remarks:—"In a course of years there may, on the whole, be less suffering than if this destruction had not occurred. It might have been prevented by greater precaution. If the beam had been wrought iron—or if the passages had connected all the coal seams together, instead of only two—or if there had been a second shaft, these 200 men would not have perished. The loss of only a few lives would have excited little attention; and accidents might have occurred year after year unchecked. But a calamity so fearful as this will at once prompt precautionary measures, and possibly legislative interference, for the protection of our miners. Thus, not at Hartley alone, but throughout all our collieries, such improved arrangements may be made, that within the next twenty years the total destruction of life, including this calamity, may be less than it otherwise would have been. Just as the sudden ravages of plague or cholera in a district where fever is perennial may compel sanitary reforms whereby the general health is improved, so in this case it may be seen that God, "from seeming evil still educes good."

5—8. (5) **privily**, secretly, treacherously. Ju. ix. 31. **proud heart**, *lit.* "wide of heart;" *i.e.* puffed up and blown out with pride. (6) **mine . . land**, to choose, and to favour all such, giving them places of authority and influence. (7) **worketh deceit**, Ps. lii. 2. **not tarry**, be allowed to remain undisturbed. (8) **early**, the Heb. fig. for *earnestly*.[a]

*The vicissitudes of life* (*v.* 5).—Amer, who had conquered Persia and Tartary, was defeated by Ismael, and taken prisoner. As he sat on the ground waiting till a soldier prepared a coarse meal to appease his huuger, a dog put its head into the pot in which his food was a-cooking: and, owing to the mouth of the vessel being so small as not to admit of its head being easily extricated, it ran away with both the pot and the meat. Amer burst into a fit of laughter; and on being asked what could incite a person in his situation to indulge in merriment, he said: "It was but this morning that the steward of my household complained that three hundred camels were not sufficient to carry away my kitchen furniture; and now how easily it is borne away by that dog, which has carried off both my cooking instruments and my dinner!"[b]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SECOND.*

1—5. (1) **my cry**, the prayer of a sufferer becomes a *cry*.[a] (2) **hide not**, Ps. xxx. 7. **speedily**, the *delays* of God being most trying to the pious soul. (3) **like smoke**, or into smoke. **as an hearth**, or firebrand when placed in the fire.[b] (4) **smitten**, as with the hot sun.[c] **forget . . bread**, in the absorption of his great grief. (5) **to my skin**, or flesh. La. iv. 8. An expression denoting extreme emaciation.[d]

in a perfect way." —*Tholuck.*

c Adj. fr. *froward*, as opposed to *toward*.

d *C. Simeon, M.A.* *v.* 1. *R. Erskine*, ii. 59; *W. C. Wilson*, i. 203; *H. Alford*, ii. 107. *v.* 2. *S. Smith*, 44; *Dr. J. Orton*, ii. 78; *Dr. H. Blair*, *v.* 181. "There is one hallowed spot where we may all sing of judgment and mercy. That spot is the cross on which the Prince of Glory died. Never were judgment and mercy so wondrously and harmoniously blended as when Jesus died—the just for the unjust—that He might bring us to God."—*Morison.*

a "The Psalmist evidently means to say that fr. day to day, executing judgment in the morning according to the Eastern custom (Je. xxi. 12), he would by degrees eliminate fr. Israel all the wicked who should be found worthy of death." —*Jennings and Lowe.* Comp. 2 Sa. xxiv. 11; Je. xxi. 12; Ps. lxviii. 14; Lu. xxii. 66. *vv.* 4, 5. *S. Wescott*, 26. *v.* 5. *R. Wake*, 216.

b *Whitecross.*

author,—unknown: date, the close of captivity

*Subj., the bitter lot of the exile.*

*Consumed like smoke.*—Some critics would have us read this, "into smoke;" but there is no valid reason why we should not take the verse as it stands; and in the connection, as applied to human life, the symbol is quite significant. For as smoke from some burning object gradually dissipates itself, and is lost in the air—lost to view and certainly decomposed, for the most part, in the element with which it commingles; so is it with the past days and years of human life, especially with those in trouble and sorrow. The individuality of each day is, as it were, lost (for the time at least) on memory's page, and day after day diffuses itself into a general haziness of incident, with only here or there a notable occurrence standing out prominently. But there is another consideration which may be fairly brought up as being suggested by the words quoted. Is it not true that there are certain minor troubles or annoyances, which form what may be called the smoke of our daily life; things which are not so much actually injurious (unless we make them so), but petty worries? They are not the clouds which overshadow our career, and assuredly not any part of the storms of life, but simply smoke. And as we have most of us observed, just in the way that a puff of dense smoke coming from a passing steam-engine will completely shut out from our gaze the sun's orb; so the smoke of some vexation, of itself trivial enough, will obscure for the time our view of the Sun of Righteousness, and occasion us either to err from the path of duty, or to pause in it. Many events occur in the Christian's history which are not of sufficient importance to be called "crosses," yet in their succession they produce a perceptible influence. In the poet's words they are—

> "The cares which petty shadows cast,
> By which our lives are chiefly proved."

And I have seen more than once a teacher, usually successful, who came to his work with a well-prepared lesson, and a heart not lacking in loving anxiety to do good, seriously impeded by smoke. All seemed as usual, yet he could not get on; the fume from some small trouble, if it did not cloud his brow, at least dimmed his eyes. We must deal with minor tribulations on the principle of certain modern appliances, which one reads are warranted to "consume their own smoke." We need not to impart them to other persons, which would lead us to magnify them, nor cherish the effects thereof in our own breasts, but extinguish these by hearty diligence in present duty.

6—10. (6) **pelican**, a bird that lives in swamps. Le. xi. 17, 18. Both the figs. of the pelican and the owl express extreme loneliness.[a] **desert**, better, ruined places. (7) **sparrow alone**, a striking object of pity.[b] (8) **are sworn**, or, swear by me; use my name as a curse.[c] (9) **eaten ashes**, comp. La. iii. 16. **mingled . . weeping**, Ps. xlii. 3. (10) **thine indignation**, the bitterest thing in our cup of grief is the feeling that it is punishment for sin, the anger of our gracious Father.

*Sparrows on the house-top.*—No traveller in Syria will long need an introduction to the sparrow on the house-top. There are countless numbers of them about you. They are a tame, troublesome, and impertinent generation, and nestle just where you don't want them. They stop up your stove and water-pipes

*a* "The P.s. opens with familiar expressions of prayer, such as rise in the heart and mouth of the praying one without his feeling that they are of foreign origin."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* "Transitory as the smoke of a fire is the poet's life, devoured as with the flame of fire is his person."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* Ps. cxxi. 6; Ho. ix. 16; Jonah iv. 8.

*d* Comp. Job xix. 20.

See *Dr. A. Rivet, Meditations*, Op. ii.

"Gold can no more fill the spirit of a man than grace his purse. Between heaven and earth, spirits and bodies, souls and silver, there is no proportion: and therefore no earthly excellences, no carnal pleasures, no worldly treasures are fit matter, or a full object, for such an immaterial, immortal, and heavenly-born being to feed upon with any proper delight, true comfort, or sound contentment."—*Bolton.*

*a* The owl is called in the Arabic, "mother of the ruins."

*b* "When one of these has lost its mate he will sit upon the house-top alone, and lament by the hour his sad bereavement."—*Thomson.*

*c* "When they curse choose me as an example of misery, and im-

with their rubbish; build in the windows and under the beams of the roof: and would stuff your hat full of stubble in half a day if they found it hanging in a place to suit them. They are extremely pertinacious in asserting their right of possession, and have not the least reverence for any place or thing. David alludes to these characteristics of the sparrow in the eighty-fourth Psalm, when he says that they had appropriated even the altars of God for their nests. Concerning himself, he says: "I watch, and am as a sparrow upon the house-top" (Psalm cii. 7). When one of them has lost its mate—a matter of every-day occurrence—he will sit on the house-top alone, and lament by the hour his sad bereavement. These birds are snared and caught in great numbers, but as they are small, and not much relished for food, five sparrows may still be sold for two farthings: and when we see their countless numbers, and the eagerness with which they are destroyed as worthless, we can better appreciate the assurance that our heavenly Father, who takes care of them, so that not one can fall to the ground without His notice, will surely take care of us, who are of more value than many sparrows.

precate upon themselves or others my misfortunes." — *Peroune.*

"The cheerful birds with sweetest notes do sing their Maker's praise: among the which the merrie nightingale, with swete and swete, her breast against a thorn, rings out all night."—*Vallans.*

11—15. (11) shadow, evening shadow.[a] Comp. Ps. cix. 23. The fig. describes the near approach of death. withered, as *v.* 4. (12) shalt endure, 1 Pe. i. 24, 25. (13) upon Zion, whose desolations seemed illustrated to the Psalmist by his own. the set time, the seventy years of prophecy were nearly completed: though this precise connection need not be pressed. (14) stones . . dust, suitable words when Jerus. was still a heap of ruins. The pleasure taken was but a melancholy pleasure. (15) so, *i.e.* when Divine deliverances for Zion are revealed.

*Revival, and its symptoms* (*vv.* 12, 13).—I. There is a favourable time to promote the revival of the Church. 1. The source to be looked to; 2. The nature of the revival to be expected—deliverance, union, prosperity; 3. The time when it may be expected. II. That such revival is always preceded by certain infallible signs. 1. Humiliation before God; 2. Believing prayer; 3. Affection for the ordinances of God's house; 4. Self-denying efforts in God's cause.[b]

*Sure signs of a revival.*—There was a woman in New Jersey, in a place where there had been a revival. She was very positive there was going to be another. She insisted upon it that they had had the former rain, and were now going to have the latter rain. She wanted to have conference meetings appointed. But the minister and elders saw nothing to encourage it, and would do nothing. She saw they were blind, and so she went forward and got a carpenter to make seats for her, for she said she would have meetings in her own house. There was certainly going to be a revival. She had scarcely opened her door for meetings, before the Spirit of God came down in great power. And these sleepy church members found themselves surrounded all at once with convicted sinners, and could only say, "Surely the Lord was in this place and I knew it not." The reason why such persons understand the indication of God's will, is not because of the superior wisdom that is in them, but because the Spirit of God leads them to see the signs of the times. And this not by revelation, but they are led to see that converging of providences

a "When it is the time of evening the shadows lengthen, but when it is dark they are no longer discernible, but come to an end and go."—*Rashi.*

*vv.* 13, 14, *R. Allistree*, 50.

*vv.* 13—15. *Dr. Brock, Blooms. Lec.* iv. 252.

b *J. Wileman.*

Jacob Knapp, who began revival services in Penn Yan, N. Y., and continued them night after night, for three weeks, without a conversion, while unbelievers were triumphing in his supposed defeat, said "My bones bleach in Penn Yan, or I see the work of the Lord prosper." That very night, a tide of conviction swept through the town; and a mighty revival followed. God honours earnestness and devotion to His own work.

to a single point, which produces in them a confident expectation of a certain result.

16—22. (16) build up Zion, restoring her from her ruins. his glory, as the faithful Promiser. (17) destitute, exiles who were without country or home. (18) written, *i.e.* the story of the returning of Divine favour to Zion. (19) looked down,[a] well acquainted with all the sufferings of His people, though for a time He held back His hand. (20) appointed to death, *Heb.* "sons of death." Ps. lxxix. 11. (21, 22) gathered together, fr. their scattering in the captivity.

*The Great Physician.*—Though thy disease be *chronical*, Christ can heal it: Christ does not say. If this disease had been taken in time it might have been cured; He is good at old sores. The thief on the cross had an old festering disease, but Christ cured it; Zaccheus, an old sinner, a custom-house man — he had wronged many a one in his time, but Christ cured him. Christ sometimes grafts His grace upon an old stock; we read, Christ cured at "sun-setting." He heals some sinners at the sun-setting of their lives.[b]

23—28. (23) weakened, *etc.*, the Psalmist here returns to his personal afflictions. The fig. may be taken from De. viii. 2. (24) in the midst, or middle; the very time of my strength; comp. the prayer of Hezekiah. (25) of old, *etc.*, He. i. 10. (26) perish, as merely created things. thou change them, the very changes and perishings being controlled by Him "whose years are throughout all generations." (27) the same, always the same; "Thou art He." He. xiii. 8.[a] (28) continue, the objects of Divine regard.

*Love of life in the middle-aged* (*v.* 24).—Our subject is the intensity of the love of life in the middle-aged. They—I. Have great confidence in the vitality of their physical frames. II. Are most fully occupied with the concerns of the present life. III. The intensity of their attachment to earthly objects. IV. Are ordinarily less prepared for death than others.[b]

*Christ's interest in the world* (*v.* 25).—This world was created for Christ. It was created for the display of His natural perfections; for the display of creative wisdom and power to angelic minds, for we are told that when He laid the foundation of the earth these sons of God sang His praises together, and shouted for joy. It was created that He might display His moral perfections, and especially on which He should show forth the glories of an incarnate God, and act the wonders of the great scheme of redemption. When Christ shall have done with it, the end of its creation will be accomplished, and then the earth will, of course, be destroyed. The visible heavens, being on fire, will be dissolved, the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth, with the works thereof, shall be burnt up.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRD.*

author,— prob. David

*Subj., the goodness of Jehovah.*

1, 2. (1) all . . me, all the parts of his soul are called upon with separate distinctness, "upon intellect, feeling, sentiment; upon his understanding, heart, and all their powers."[a] (2) benefits, a word summing up all God's gracious ways with him.[b]

*a* De. xxvi. 15. vv. 19, 20. *J. Brewster*, 23; *S. Smith*, 367. "The sun is ever glorious in the most cloudy day, but appears not so till it hath scattered the clouds that muffle it up from the sight of the lower world. God is glorious when the world sees Him not; but His declarative glory then appears, when the glory of His mercy, and truth, and faithfulness, breaks forth in His people's salvation." — *Gurnall.* *b T. Watson* (1660).

*a* Is. xli. 4, xliii. 10. *b Dr. E. Y. Hatfield.* *c* 23. *Dr. V. Knox*, vi. 321. *v.* 23—25. *Dr. W. Harris*, ii. 42. vv. 24—27. *Dr Dwight*, i. 70. *v.* 25. *Dr. Duchal*, i. 317. vv. 25—27. *J. R. Pitman*, 375; *S. Charnock*, i. 447; *Dr. W. Bates*, iv. 176. *v.* 28. *T. Manton*, iii. 116. "Old age, and waxing old as a garment, is written on the fairest face of creation." — *Rutherford.* *c Dr. Payson.*

*a Spk. Com.* *b* "This r. touches the secret spring

*A thanksgiving song* (*vv.* 2, 3).—I. Why sin is called a disease. 1. It destroys moral beauty; 2. It excites pain; 3. It disables from duty; 4. It deprives men of sound reason; 5. It leads to death. II. The variety of sinful diseases to which we are subject. III. The remedy by which God heals these diseases. 1. Pardoning mercy through Christ; 2. Sanctifying influences of grace; 3. The means of grace; 4. The resurrection of the body; 5. The case of an insensible sinner is deplorable; 6. Of the Christian is hopeful; 7. The glory of Christ as the physician of souls is great indeed.[c]

*A place for Psa. ciii.*—Should it not have its place also in seasons of bereavement? It was John Angell James's custom to read this Psalm at family prayers every Saturday evening. On the Saturday of the week in which Mrs. James died he hesitated, with the open Bible in his hand, before he began to read; but, after a moment's silence, he looked up and said, "Notwithstanding what has happened this week, I see no reason for departing from our usual custom of reading the one hundred and third Psalm: 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.'"

of so much ingratitude—forgetfulness, the want of recollection, or gathering together again of all the varied threads of mercy."—*Perowne.*

c *The Study.*

See *W. Dunlop*, i. 339.

*v.* 1. *G. Nicholson*, 119; *R. Mitchell, Bamp. Lec.* 275.

*vv.* 1, 2. *C. Chais*, i. 186; *Dr. J. Gardiner*, 179; *C. Foster*, 117.

3—5. (3) **all**, the stress of the verse lies on this word; every one of them, so that not a trace of them is left. **diseases**, bodily consequences of sin. (4) **destruction**, or the pit, Ps. xvi. 10. **crowneth thee**, maketh thy life bright and joyous, or that of one who is crowned. Note that God's favour is the true crown of life. (5) **mouth**, poetic fig. for necessity and desire. God "gives Himself to us as the bread of life." **youth**, *etc.*, better as Pr. Bk. Vers. "Making thee young and lusty as an eagle."[a]

*The renewal of youth* (*v.* 4).—I. Explain the figure. The eagle is the emblem of the mature Christian—1. In the penetration of its eye; 2. In the elevation of its flight; 3. In the swiftness of its motion; 4. In the dignity of its appearance. II. Illustrate the fact—1. In the recovery of health after severe sickness; 2. In the revival of religion in the soul after a season of declension; 3. In the glories of immortality.[b]

*Daily mercies.*—Gotthold saw a boy standing upon the bank of a lake, casting pebbles into the water. Each, as it fell, produced a number of circles upon the surface, which were small at first, but became gradually wider and wider, until at last they disappeared from the view. He said, "If I begin to ponder the wondrous dealings and holy purposes of my God, I always see one Divine benefit and proof of wisdom appearing behind another; or if I have searched, in some measure, one little circle of His ways, I perceive a thousand others, all widening as they recede, which at last fill me with awe, so that I stop and exclaim, 'Oh the depths of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!'"

a Is. xl. 31.

b *G. Brooks.*

*v.* 4. *Dr. W. Bates*, ii. 1.

"Well may we wonder that the great God should stoop so low, to enter into such a covenant of grace and peace, founded upon such a Mediator as Christ, with such utter enemies, base creatures, sinful dust and ashes as we are. This is the wonder of angels, a torment of devils, and the glory of our nature and persons, and will be matter of admiration and praising God to us for all eternity."—*Sibbs.*

6—8. (6) **for all**, and not for me only. (7) **his ways**, of righteousness and judgment, Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. (8) **merciful**, *etc.*, Ps. lxxxvi. 15, cxlv. 8.[a]

*Plenteous in mercy* (*v.* 8).—I. Reason cannot assure us that God is plenteous in mercy. II. His dispensations do not prove that God is plenteous in mercy. III. The Scriptures declare that God is plenteous in mercy. IV. The gift of Christ demonstrates

a Ne. ix. 17, 31; Joel ii. 13.

*v.* 7. *Dr. J. Fletcher*, iii. 199.

*v.* 8. *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 407; *Dr. T. Dwight*, i. 182.

"We wear mer-

cies, we breathe mercies, we walk on mercies; our whole life is but a passage from one mercy to another."—*Gurnall.*

*b G. Brooks.*

"If the one end of mercy were not the beginning of another, we were undone."—*P. Henry.*

that God is plenteous in mercy. V. The experience of penitents confirms that God is plenteous in mercy.[b]

*God's long-suffering and mercy.*—God's mercies are above all His works. All His attributes sit at the feet of mercy. Neh. ix. 17: "Thou art a God ready to pardon," or rather, as in the original, "a God of pardons;" in which last expression there is a very great emphasis, as it shows that mercy is essential unto God: and that He is incomparable in forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin. As a circle begins everywhere and ends nowhere, so do the mercies of God. When Alexander encamped before a city, he used to set up a light, to give notice to those within that if they came forth to him while that light lasted, they should have quarter; if otherwise, no mercy was to be expected. But such is the mercy and patience of God to sinners, that He sets up light after light, and waits year after year, and even invites men to come unto Him that they may have life.

9—12. (9) always chide, or be contending.[a] keep, *i.e.* cherish any grudge.[b] (10) not according, *etc.*, on what principles then are God's dealings based? "He remembereth that we are dust," *v.* 14, so the Judge is merciful. Law knows no mercy, but the administrator of law may. (11) as the heaven, marg. "according to the height of heaven." No better conception of infinite distance could be given.[c] (12) east . . west, two opposite directions.[d]

*Past benefits* (*v.* 10).—I. Man stands in a continued relation to the past. II. Man is called upon to reason from the past to the future. III. This call to reason from the past to the future is an incidental illustration of the unchangeableness of God,—what He was, He will be. Apply:—1. The atheism of anticipation should be corrected by the reverent gratitude of retrospection; 2. He who reviews the past thankfully, may advance to the future hopefully; 3. Nothing forgotten so soon as benefits.[e]

*From the east to the west* (*v.* 12).—An astronomical fact may give, perhaps, new and more exalted views of the force of this passage. The distance from north to south is measurable. In every sphere there are north and south poles—both fixed points; and on the earth the distance between them is about twelve thousand miles. So that had the Psalmist said, "As far as the north is from the south," our conceptions would have been thus limited. It is otherwise with the east and the west. There are no eastern and western poles. From every point alike in the circuit of the world, the east extends in one direction, the west in the other. Thus, the traveller westward, for example, might be said to be for ever chasing the west without coming nearer to it. The Psalmist himself might not have known this astronomical fact; yet, regarding his words as dictated by the Spirit of God, we are surely permitted to read them in the light of modern science, and so to discern in them the most forcible illustration that can be imagined of the illimitable distance to which God has removed the iniquities of His people.[f]

13, 14. (13) as a father,[a] comp. De. xxxii. 6; Job x. 8; Is. xxix. 16, lxiii. 16, lxiv. 8; Matt. vii. 7—11. the Lord pitieth, with a pity that is father-like.[b] (14) our frame, our formation; or our fashioning (Ge. ii. 7).[c] Man's frailties are tenderly regarded. God estimates what we *can* do, as well as what we

*a* Comp. Is. lvii. 16.

"He is not only long in anger, *i.e.* waiting a long time before He lets His anger loose, but when He contends, or interposes judicially, this too is not carried to the full extent."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* Le. xix. 18.

*c* "God's love cannot be measured by all the measures of the universe."—*Perowne.*

*d* "Words which gained new force in the months of those who had been gathered fr. the far-off regions of the East to their own home."—*Wordsworth.*

Comp. Is. xxxviii. 17; Mi. vii. 19.

*v.* 10. *Dr. Hole*, i. 546; *J. H. Smith*, ii. 325.

*e Dr. Parker.*

*f S. S. Teacher.*

*a* "God is compared with earthly fathers not bec. He is like them, but bec. His in-

*should.* **dust,** Ge. iii. 19. Perhaps the Psalmist is thinking that God gave the bodily form according to His will, just as the potter gives what shape he pleases to the clay. The material in itself is worthless.

*Divine pity* (*v.* 13).—Two sorts of pity. One resembles contempt, a supercilious condescension, ostentatious compassion. The other involves sympathy, arising out of a "feeling of our infirmity." This the pity of a father and of God. I. How is it evinced? "Like as a father." 1. At all times. In our joyous moments we may need pity more than in others: He knows how soon they end. Especially in our troubles and toils. His pity practical, present comfort and aid. Is sin a trouble, and duty a toil? God pities us—2. In many ways: food, clothing, etc., the result of our father's pity; food, etc., for the soul, the result of God's pity. II. For whom is it designed? "Them that fear Him." All should, some do, fear God; unreasonable to expect that those should be pitied who "have no fear of God before their eyes." The pity of earthly father proportionable, in its practical results, to the child's fear and consequent obedience. III. What are its effects? 1. In us, a pleasant sense of security; confidence that we shall be aided in trouble and labour; 2. For us, guidance, protection, support all through life, and a welcome home at last; for "whom He loved, He loved to the end." (1) Do not proudly resist the pity of God; "He resisteth the proud:" (2) Learn, from the pity of God, to be pitiful and kind to all men; (3) Seek the pity of God now, in your pardon and adoption into His family; (4) Fear God and keep His commandments.[a]

*A father's treatment of his son.*—A celebrated preacher, in illustrating the truth contained in that passage, "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," was often wont to refer to the following fact which he had learned in Dublin: "A grey-headed and pious father had a very wicked son. The old man had often prayed and wrestled with God on his behalf. But he became worse and worse. Never did the father close his doors against him. One day, one of the father's neighbours addressed him with considerable severity, saying, 'Why harbour that reprobate son of yours? Why don't you turn him out of doors, and banish him from your house?' 'Ay, ay,' said the aged saint, his grey locks trembling with emotion, 'you can all turn him out of doors but his own father.'"

15–18. (15) **as for man,** *i.e.* as a mortal being. **as grass,** a frequent Scrip. comparison.[a] (16) **wind,** east wind, wh. quickly changes a flourishing garden into a waste.[b] **place . . more,** *see* Job vii. 10. (17) **mercy of the Lord,** goodness, justice, faithfulness to promise, patience, all blend in the Divine *mercy.* **from everlasting,** not merely continuing ever, but rising over the God-fearing man, like the encompassing heavens. **fear him,** and therefore hope in His mercy.[c] (18) **covenant,** De. vii. 9.[d]

*Man and mercy* (*vv.* 15–19).—These passages form a contrast between man's life and God's mercy. I. There is a contrast in their strength. II. A contrast in their beauty. III. A contrast in their duration. 1. Man cannot carry out his designs after death, but mercy executes her designs independent of his presence; 2. Mercy distributes her invaluable blessings among families throughout all generations.[e]

*Earthly greatness transient* (*v.* 15).—It is truly humbling to

comparable love towards us cannot be expressed otherwise."—*Calvin.*

*b* "The life and death of God manifest in the flesh are the best comment upon these signal words of prophecy."—*Spk. Com.*

Comp. Is. xxxi. 18–20; Mal. iii. 17.

*c* Comp. Ge. vi. 3. *v.* 13. *J. Saurin,* vii. 89; *J. H. Stewart,* 153; *J. Bingham,* viii. 461.

*v.* 14. *H. Grove,* i. 198; *J. Hewlett,* i. 437.

*d Hire.*

A gentleman once said, "There is one verse in the Bible I could never appreciate: 'Like as a father pitieth his children.' My father was a tyrant."

"The rose-lipp'd cherubs round the throne of heaven, have not their bosoms more divinely warm with melting mercy, than that tender breast.—*Fettiplace Bellers.*

*a* Ps. xxxvii. 2, 10, 36, xc. 5, 6; Is. xl. 6–8, li. 12; 1 Pe. i. 24.

*b* "Such wind is 'an emblem of every form of peril that threatens life; often enough it is really a breath of wind that snaps off a man's life.'"—*Delitzsch.*

*c* "For the third time God's mercy and loving-kindness is said to be upon 'them that fear Him' (*vv.* 11

13). as if to remind us that there is a love within a love, a love wh. they only know who have tasted that the Lord is gracious, who fear Him, and walk in His ways."—*Penrose.*

*d* He. viii. 10, 12.

*vr.* 15, 16. *Dr. Jortin*, ii. 158; *Dr. W. Cooper*, ii. 261; *Bp. Mant*, iii. 389; *Bp. Bull*, i. 193.

*e J. J. in Homilist.*

*f R. T. S.*

*a* "His call to these arises fr. the consciousness of the Church on earth that it stands in living like-minded fellowship with the angels of God, and that it possesses a dignity wh. rises above all created things, even the angels which are appointed to serve it."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* Ps. lxxviii. 25, marg., lxxxix. 6; Joel iii. 11.

*c* Ps. cxlv. 10.

*v.* 19. *Dr. D. Whitby*, i. 289; *Dr. J. Hunt*, ii. 195; *H. Stebbing*, iii. 25; *Dr. J. Leland*, ii. 81.

*w.* 20. *J. Johnson*, ii. 133; *J. Grant*, 351; *G. S. Drew*, 123.

*d S. Charnock.*

*e Whitecross.*

author and date, unknown

*An anthem of natural theology, or a Divine ode of creation.*

*a* Ge. i. 3.

*b* Sight is put

the pride of man to see to what a state of mental and physical ruin he is brought by the lapse of time. Sir Isaac Newton, that wonderful scholar, of whom it is said, that he "surpassed the whole human race in genius," and who, if any one can be properly styled great and illustrious, is surely entitled to these epithets, when, in his declining years, he was requested to explain some passage in his chief mathematical work, could only, as it is reported, say that he knew it was true once. A circumstance in some degree similar is related of that celebrated military commander, the first Duke of Marlborough, who flourished about the same period. When the history of his own campaigns was read to him, to beguile the tedious hours in the evening of life, we are told, so far were his intellectual faculties impaired, that he was unconscious of what he had done, and asked in admiration, from time to time, "Who commanded?" Here, then, not to cite more examples, we have fresh proofs that "all the glory of man," even in what he is most especially apt to value himself, is but "as the flower of grass."*f*

19—22. (19) **the heavens,** in opposition to the earth, on wh. kings' thrones are set, is the "unchangeable realm above the rise and fall of things here below." **all,** absolutely all created existence. (20) **angels,** suggested by the reference to the "heavens" in *v.* 19.*a* **excel in strength,***b* or, "ye strong warriors." **do his commandments,** "their life endowed with heroic strength is spent entirely in an obedient execution of the word of God." **hearkening,** comp. angel attributes, Is. vi. 2. (21) **hosts,** still referring to the angels. (22) **works,** upon the earth. Prob. meaning all living rational creatures.*c*

*God's dominion* (*v.* 19).—I. This dominion is threefold. 1. Natural; 2. Spiritual; 3. Glorious. In showing that God's dominion is over all—II. I shall lay down some general propositions for the clearing and confirming it. III. I shall show wherein this right of dominion is founded. IV. What the nature of it is. V. Wherein it consists, and how it is manifested.*d*

*Divine providence.*—There is at Bristol a charitable institution called "Colston's School," from the name of its founder. The scholars wear on their breasts the figure of a dolphin in brass, the reason of which is as follows:—Mr. Colston, a rich West Indian merchant, was coming home with a ship which contained all his treasure: she sprung a leak, and after having pumped for a long time, day and night, the people on board were every moment expecting to go to the bottom. At once, to their great astonishment, the leak was stopped. On examination, it was found that a dolphin had providentially squeezed itself into the hole, and thus saved them from destruction. Mr. Colston, therefore, ordered this emblem of a dolphin to be worn as a signal both of his deliverance and gratitude.*e*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FOURTH.*

1—5. (1) **very great,** such simple words indicate feeling that transcends all language. **clothed,** *etc.*, as Ps. xciii. 1. (2) **light,** referring to the work of God on the first day.*a* **garment,** or robe, as for a great king.*b* (3) **chambers,** God's creation is poetically conceived of as a splendid palace where God, the great

King, dwells. waters, those above the firmament are like the palace roof. chariot, in wh. He rides forth. When He walks it is on the wind. (4) maketh, *etc.*, lit. "Who makes His messengers winds; His servants a fire flaming," meaning that winds and lightning fires are His messengers.[c] (5) foundations, wh. are like His palace floor.

*The powers of nature* (*v.* 4).—The danger of many philosophical pursuits is of resting in things seen, and forgetting unseen things, and our ignorance about them. I. What a number of beautiful and wonderful objects does nature present on every side of us, and how little we know concerning them! II. While this doctrine raises the mind, and gives it matter for thought, it is also profitable as a humbling doctrine. III. It is a motive to our exertions in doing the will of God, to think, that if we attain to heaven, we shall be the fellows of the blessed angels.[d]

*Extract from the Zendavesta.*—The following beautiful invocation to the Creator, taken from the Parsee Zendavesta, bears a remarkable parallelism to various passages in the Old Testament, a parallelism which affords indubitable evidence that the relics of a patriarchal revelation are yet to be traced amidst the obscurities and corruptions of the older theologies of Asia:—"1. I invite and announce to me the Creator, Ahura-Mazda, the brilliant, the majestic, greatest, best, most beautiful. 2. The strongest, most intellectual, of the best body, the highest through holiness. 3. Who is very wise, who rejoices afar. 4. Who created us, who formed us, who keeps us, the holiest among the heavenly.—Yacna, I."

6—9. (6) coveredst it, for the early condition of the earth as surrounded with water or vapour, comp. Ge. i. 2.[a] (7) rebuke, or command.[b] thunder, wh. best represents to the poet what the voice of God must have been. (8) go up, better rend. "The mountains rose, the valleys sank." This sentence should be put in parenthesis.[c] (9) set a bound, this was broken in the time of the deluge:[d] but that was upon God's special commandment, and many think it was only a partial flood.

*God seen in His works.*—I. See God in the heavens. In sun, moon, stars, cloud, wind, lightning, rain, and dew. II. See God in the earth. In its order; its relations of sea and land; its mountains, sea margin, valleys, streams, trees, flowers, etc. III. See God in the creatures of earth. All animals, their habits and needs. All graciously provided for.

*Omnipresence of God.*—There is no space, not the least, wherein God is not wholly according to His essence, and wherein His whole substance does not exist; not a part of heaven can be designed wherein the Creator is not wholly; as He is in one part of heaven, He is in every part of heaven. Some kind of resemblance we may have from the water of the sea, which fills the great space of the world, and is diffused through all; yet the essence of water is in every drop of water in the sea, as much as the whole, and the same quality of water, though it comes short in quantity; and why shall we not allow God a nobler way of presence, without diffusion, as is in that? Or take this resemblance, since God likens Himself to light in the Scripture: "He covereth Himself with light." . . . A crystal globe hung up in the air hath light all about it, all within it, every part is pierced by it, wherever you see the crystal you see the light; the light in first, as being to man the most glorious and splendid of God's works, and the very vehicle of the splendour of them all."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* "In comparing the light to a robe, he signifies that though God is invisible, yet His glory is manifest."—*Calvin.* "Is there in the universe a created thing more worthy to be the robe of Jehovah, whose very being is such that He dwelleth in darkness,"—*Herder.*

*c* He. i. 7. "Who maketh His angels like winds, *i.e.* incorporeal, swift, powerful."—*Wordsworth.*

*v.* 3. *J. Hewlett*, iii. 291.

*d J. H. Newman.*

*a* Job xxxviii. 8—11; 2 Pe. iii. 5.

*b* "This vast, swelling, tumultuous sea hears the 'rebuke' of God, and sinks to its appointed place; the earth appears, emerges fr. her watery covering, and shows her surface diversified with mountain and valley."—*Perowne.*

*c* "The expressions may describe the tumultuous rush of the waters over the mountains and into valleys in quest of the spots where God has determined they are to abide."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*d* Job xxxviii. 8—11. "Nature is the chart of God, mapping out all

His attributes; art is the shadow of His wisdom, and copieth His resources."—*Tupper.*

*e S. Charnock.*

one part of the crystal cannot be distinguished from the light in the other part; and the whole essence of light is in every part; and shall not God be as much present with His creatures as one creature can be with another?[e]

10—13. (10) **valleys**, or torrent-beds. **run . . hills**, rend. that they should make their way between the mountains. (11) **wild asses**,[a] peculiarly wild creatures, untended by man, but cared for by God. **quench**, lit. *break.* (12) **by them**, or above them. **fowls**, Ge. i. 30, ii. 19. **sing**, *lit.* give out their voice. (13) **chambers**, *see v.* 3. The clouds are up in the roof of God's palace. **satisfied**, refreshed and nourished.[b]

*Man's works and God's.*—Man sows the seed, but God only can make it fructify. The richest showers cannot make the ground fruitful, but as instruments under God's blessing. 'Tis the word of His lips, not of man's, whereby any are "snatched out of the paths of the destroyer:" as well as kept from them. Man's teachings direct us to Christ; God's teachings bring us to Christ. Man brings the Gospel almost to the heart; the Spirit only brings the Gospel into the heart. Man puts the key into the lock: God only turns it. Man brings the word of truth, and God the truth of the word into the soul. God only can knock off the fetters of a spiritual death, and open the iron gates, that the King of glory may enter with spiritual life.[c]

14, 15. (14) **grass . . herb**, Ge. i. 11, 29, 30. The term "herb" includes corn, etc. **service of man**, perhaps should be, "for the labour of man,"[a] that he, by his labour, should bring food out of the earth. It appears, however, that God's gifts are here alone dealt with. (15) **wine**, *etc.*, man's luxuries as well as man's necessities are supplied by God's gracious provision.[b]

*The adaptation of nature.*—Every department of vegetation is to be regarded as the very counterpart of and as suited to its respective tenants. The verdant field is the pasture-ground of flocks and herds, and of all the teeming armies of insect life that feed on its surface. Every forest is the roaming-ground of its own wild tenants. "The trees of the Lord are full of sap"—full of foliage and flowers and nutritious fruits for the use of man and beast, bird and insect—"the cedars of Lebanon, which He hath planted, where the birds make their nests." Every leaf is a play-ground and a pasture-ground for the numerous tribes that roam and feed and sport on its surface. Every flower, vocal with the songs of its merry tenants, is the resort or the residence of numerous families of living creatures that seek pleasure or perfume, or nectarine sweets, or a floral shade, or shelter, in its soft and quiet bosom. Every variety of flower has its own peculiar inhabitants that seek in it protection, food, or pleasure. Indeed, we shall everywhere discover a beautiful correspondence between the animal and the vegetable worlds. The one is made for the other.[c]

16—18. (16) **trees of the Lord**, those in the second clause called "the cedars of Lebanon." Mighty trees, yet God abundantly satisfies them.[a] Called trees of God because not planted by any human hands: trees of the forest and mountain, in contrast with the vine and olive. (17) **the stork**, Le. xi. 19.[b] (18) **wild goat**, mentioned as beyond human care. **conies**, the *Lyrax Syriacus.* Le. xi. 5.

*a* Corn, wine, and oil were the glory of the promised land. De. xi. 14, xviii. 4. *v.* 14. *E.W. Whitaker*, iii. 231. *v.* 15. *Dr. B. Kennet*, 142. "Nature is mighty; art is mighty; artifice is weak. For Nature is the work of a mightier power than man. Art is the work of man, under the guidance and inspiration of a mightier power. Artifice is the work of mere man, in the imbecility of his mimic understanding."—*Hare.*

*c Read.*

*a* "He satisfies with His abundant rain the world of plants and trees, the cedars of Lebanon."—*Spk. Com.*

*b Ciconia alba*, or

*The cedars of Lebanon* (*v.* 16).—We have here—I. The absence of all human culture. 1. The Lord's trees owe their planting entirely to Him: 2. They are not dependent on man for their watering; 3. No mortal might protects them; 4. They preserve a sublime indifference to human gaze: 5. Their exaltation is all for God, not for man; 6. They are independent of man in their expectations. II. The cedars of Lebanon are a glorious display of the Divine care. 1. In the abundance of their supply; 2. They are always green; 3. Note their grandeur, size, and fragrance; 4. Attentively think upon the perpetuity of them; 5. They are very venerable. III. The fulness of the living principle. 1. Full of sap—this is vitally necessary; 2. Essentially mysterious; 3. Radically secret; 4. Permanently active; 5. Externally operative; 6. Abundantly to be desired.[c]

*The stork's home* (*v.* 17).—Some unnecessary difficulty has been raised respecting the expression, "As for the stork, the fir trees are her house." In the west of Europe, the home of the stork is connected with the dwellings of man; and in the East, as the eagle is mentally associated with the most sublime scenes in nature, so, to the traveller at least, is the stork with the ruin of man's noblest works. In lands of ruins, which, from their neglect and want of drainage, supply him with abundance of food, he finds a column or a solitary arch the most secure position for his nest; but where neither towers nor ruins abound he does not hesitate to select a tall tree, as both storks, swallows, and many other birds must have done before they were tempted by the artificial convenience of man's buildings to desert their natural places of nidification. Thus the golden eagle builds, according to circumstances, in cliffs, on trees, or even on the ground; and the common heron, which generally associates on the tops of the tallest trees, builds, in Westmoreland and in Galway, on bushes. It is therefore needless to interpret the text of the stork merely perching on trees. It probably was no less numerous in Palestine when David wrote than now, but the number of suitable towers must have been far fewer, and it would therefore resort to trees. Though it does not frequent trees in South Judæa, yet it still builds on trees by the Sea of Galilee, according to several travellers; and the writer may remark that while he has never seen the nest except on towers or pillars in that land of ruins, Tunis, the only nest he ever saw in Morocco was on a tree.[d]

19—23. (19) for seasons, to mark them. Ge. i. 14. This is to be taken with the next clause. (20) makest darkness (Ge. i. 16—18), by withdrawing the light, and throwing portions of the earth into shade. the beasts, night being their feeding time. creep forth, or move about. (21) young lions, not *cubs*, but fierce lions, just in their prime vigour; even they must wait on God.[a] (22) dens, to sleep after their full meals. (23) until the evening, God having given him the day, as He has given the beasts the night.

*Wild beasts in the East.*—In their dens and lurking-places, in the tangled depths of the jungle, do these terrible creatures crouch and lie down, and hide themselves from the light of day; but no sooner do the shades of evening cover the earth, than with stealthy tread they creep forth. The cantonment of Kamptee, in the East Indies, is situated on the banks of a river, *nigra*; both are common in Palestine, and build their nests in trees and marshy forest places.

*c C. H. Spurgeon.*

"Blest silent groves! O may ye be for ever mirth's best nursery! May pure contents for ever pitch their tents upon these downs, these meads, these rocks, these mountains, and peace still slumber by these purling fountains."—*Raleigh.* "Sunny spots of greenery."—*Coleridge.*

*d Dr. Tristram.* "At this season of the year there is a revolution in nature which certainly claims our attention. It is the time the birds lay, and hatch their young. This annual miracle passes in a manner before our eyes. What little we know of the generation of birds is sufficient to prove the wisdom of the Creator, as it can neither be attributed to a blind chance nor to art assisting nature."—*Sturm.*

*a* "It is the chief object of the writer, as far as this part of the Ps. is concerned, to depict God's care for all His creatures, and their dependence on Him for all their necessities."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 23. *R. Polwhele*, i. 247; *Dr. J. Disney*, iv. 181; *Bp. Maltby*, i. 341; *J. H. Newman*, 1 and 447.

Creation—so far at least as concerns this world—has been compared to a pyramid. Beginning with the mineral, passing upwards into the vegetable, and rising into the animal kingdom, we find man standing upon its apex, the crowning work of God.

*b S. S. Teacher.*

"Improvable reason is the distinction between man and the animal."—*Binney.*

the bed of which is dry for several months in the year. A few miles on the opposite side the country is covered with low brushwood which terminates in a dense jungle of unknown extent, and untrodden by the foot of man. Here the wild beasts have their covert, and exist in large numbers. In fear and trembling the natives of the surrounding villages watch for the approach of night, when these animals, thirsting for blood, creep forth in search of their prey. Their cattle are carried off and destroyed in immense numbers, and nothing can exceed the tragic tales told of the loss of human life. During the first few months of the stay of his regiment in this cantonment, an officer was enabled to kill no less than seventeen royal tigers. The natives looked upon him as the greatest deliverer they had ever known. Before dusk he was in the habit, with his servants, of climbing trees, under which bullocks had previously been tied, and there awaiting with loaded pistols, the approach of the enemy. A poor horsekeeper belonging to this regiment was sleeping, according to his custom, by the side of his horse. His little boy of three years of age was beside him. He was awakened by the screams of his child, to see him borne away by an enormous tiger. Pursuit was useless; the terrible animal with its living burden was traced down to the bed of the river, but no more was seen or heard of the poor child.[b]

*a* Ne. ix. 6.

*b* Ps. cvii. 23—31.

*v.* 24. *Bp. Tillotson*, viii. 125.

*c Dr. Parker.*

"Now, Nature has made nothing in vain. Wherever she has prepared a habitation she immediately peoples it. She is never straitened for want of room. She has placed animals, furnished with fins, in a single drop of water, and in such multitudes that Leeuwenhock, the natural philosopher, reckoned up to thousands of them."—*Bernardin de St. Pierre.*

"Who taught the natives of the field and wood to shun their poison and to choose their food? Prescient the tides and tempests to withstand, build on the wave, or arch beneath the sand?"—*Pope.*

24—27. (24) **manifold**, many-sided and various. **wisdom**, the special wisdom of adaptation to circumstances and necessities. **thy riches**, man's only true riches are the things God graciously provides for him.[a] (25) **sea**, the Mediterranean is chiefly in the thought of the Jewish poets. **creeping**, not exactly a suitable word for the movements of the creatures of the sea. (26) **ships**, "carrying the thoughts and the passions, the skill and the enterprise of human hearts." **leviathan**, Job xli. 1.[b] (27) **wait .. thee**, the Creator who art also the Provider.

*The spiritual significance of the universe* (*vv.* 24—30).—This Psalm suggests—I. That the Divine existence should constitute the central fact in all contemplations of the universe. 1. To disprove the speculations of pantheism; 2. To annihilate the materialistic theory; 3. To invest the universe with a mystic sanctity. II. That the principle of dependence is everywhere developed in the universe. Hence we infer—1. That there exists an absolutely self-existent power; 2. That each part of the universe has its own mission; 3. That profound humility becomes every intelligent agent. III. That an intelligent contemplation of the universe is calculated to increase man's hatred of sin. 1. Because sin mars the harmony of law; 2. Because God, in having made so wondrous a universe, has proved Himself too good a Being to be disobeyed.[c]

*Nature aiding science.*—When Smeaton had reflected long, in search of that form which would be best fitted to resist the combined action of wind and waves, he found it in the trunk of the oak. When Watt was employed to conduct the supply of water across the Clyde to the city of Glasgow, he borrowed his admirable contrivance of a flexible water-main from considering the flexibility of the lobster's tail; and so, when M. Brunel was engaged in superintending the construction of the tunnel under the Thames, it was from observing the head of an apparently

insignificant insect that he derived his first conception of the ingenious shield which he introduced in advance of the workmen to protect them from being crushed by the falling in of the earth.[d]

28—32. (28) gather, as their provender: pick up from the earth or sea.[a] (29) takest . . breath, so not their food only, but their health and life depend on God.[b] (30) spirit, or breath. Ge. ii. 7. renewest, by the wind and rain, etc. (31) glory, of the living Provider and Ruler. rejoice, as in creation He saw everything to be *good*. (32) looketh, *etc.*, poetical figures of God's majesty, power, and awe-inspiring presence.

*Adaptation of God's works.*—A Frenchman of infidel principles was walking one evening beneath the shade of some noble trees in the neighbourhood of B——. It was one of those beautiful evenings best known to those who have travelled in countries where no clouds obstruct the golden rays of the setting sun: the air was balmy, and the birds sang harmoniously. "How grand and beautiful are these noble trees!" said the wanderer, as he looked up into their branches; "but how singular that so large a tree should bear a fruit so small as the acorn!" Still wondering, he cast his eye upon a gourd vine running along the hedgerow, with its stem so tender that the slightest pressure would have severed it, and yet yielding a fruit weighing one hundred pounds. "How singular," said the wanderer, "that so small a plant should grow so large a fruit! If I had been God," said he, "I would have managed creation better than this. I would have put the small fruit on the small plant, and I would have placed the large gourd on this noble oak." And then, wearied with the heat of the day, he lay himself beneath the shade of its spreading branches and fell asleep. A gentle zephyr rushed amid the leaves, and an acorn, already ripe, fell on the face of the sleeper. Awakened by the falling of the little fruit, the thought flashed upon his mind, "Had that been the gourd of one hundred pounds' weight, I should probably by this time have been a corpse." He immediately went on his knees to ask forgiveness of God, whom he had blasphemed. He saw that the Author of all good had rightly disposed of every tree, and the fruit thereof. Conviction went on, under Divine direction, until conversion took its place, and the thoughtless blasphemer became a servant of the Most High God.[c]

33—35. (33) long as I live, a proper response to such a conviction of God's power and goodness. (34) meditation, or words: meditation expressed in speech. (35) sinners, who fail to recognise and love this God of mercy.

*The duty of praising God* (*vv.* 33, 34).—From these words we learn—I. What was the frame of David's mind. It was a frame—1. Most becoming; 2. Most delightful; 3. To which it is our bounden duty also to attain. II. The way in which it may be attained. 1. By meditation; 2. By resolving to rest in nothing short of it.[a]

Were *the variety of tones in the human voice*, peculiar to each person, to cease, and the handwriting of all men to become perfectly uniform, a multitude of distressing deceptions and perplexities would be produced in the domestic, civil, and com-

*d S. S. Teacher.*

*a Hengstenberg* thinks there is a distant reference to the gathering of the *manna*.
*b* "The breath of life which God breathed into man's nostrils is, according to the poetical conception, recalled to God when man dies." — *Jennings and Lowe.*
*v.* 30. *W. Jay*, i. 61; *J. Foster*, i. 128; *J. Bullar*, 188.
*v.* 31. *T. Bowdler*, ii. 18.
"In every aspect of nature there is joy; whether it be in the purity of virgin morning, or the sombre grey of a day of clouds, or the solemn pomp and majesty of night; whether it be the chaste lines of the crystal, or the waving outline of distant hills, tremulously visible through dim vapours; the minute petals of the fringed daisy, or the overhanging form of mysterious forests."—*F. W. Robertson.*
*c Trans. fr. French.*

*v.* 34. *Dr. T. Horton*, 170; *W. Bridge*, iii. 124; *S. Lavington*, i. 505; *J. Scott*, 1; *C. E. Kennaway*, ii. 95.

*a C. Simeon.*
"The study of nature requires two qualifications of the mind, which at first sight appear to be opposed to each other—the comprehensive

view of a bold genius that embraces the whole, and the minute and careful inspection of an unwearied industry that lives upon the smallest objects." — *Buffon.*
*b Dr. Dick.*

mercial transactions of mankind. But the all-wise and beneficent Creator has prevented all such evils and inconveniences, by the character of variety which He has impressed on the human species, and on all His works. By the peculiar features of his countenance every man may be distinguished in the light; by the tones of his voice he may be recognised in the dark, or when he is separated from his fellows by an impenetrable partition; and his handwriting can attest his existence and individuality when continents and oceans interpose between him and his relations, and be a witness of his sentiments and purposes to future generations.[b]

author,—unknown: date, after the return from captivity

*Recounting the dealings of Jehovah with His people.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FIFTH.*

1—4. (1) **give thanks**, Is. xii. 4.[a] Thanks are especially due bec. God's ways with His people have proved *merciful* ways. **call . . name**,[b] the covenant-name, Jehovah. **people**, peoples, in the sense of the nations around. (2) **talk ye of**, so as to make Jehovah's ways generally known.[c] (3) **glory**, or boast ye; laud and magnify it. (4) **his strength**, or the "ark of His strength" (2 Chro. vi. 41; Ps. cxxxii. 8), a poetic figure for the temple, where God's strength, or glory, is manifested.[d]

*The duty of seeking God* (v. 4).—God has given unto us many days—to some more—to some less—but in one of these He hath, unknown to us, conveyed the bitter sting of death; and it may so fall out, that in the day of our greatest rejoicing, a deadly cup of poison may be reached out to us. Death, like an unbidden guest, may rush in upon us, and spoil all our mirth on a sudden. O how watchful, how diligent, should the consideration of these things make every one of us to be, to look upon every day as the day of our death, every breathing the last breathing we shall make, to think upon the ringing of every passing bell, that ours may be next; upon hearing the clock strike, that there is an hour less to live, and one step nearer to our long home, the house appointed for all living.[e]

5—8. (5) **wonders**, or tokens; with special reference to the miracles in Egypt. **judgments**, or decrees, as of a king.[a] (6) **his servant**, this is a descrip. of Israel, as the "seed," not of Abraham. **his chosen**, plural, agreeing with the word "children," not with Jacob.[b] (7) **the Lord**, better read, "Jehovah, our God." "He is in covenant relation with us, and at the same time Judge of all the earth." (8) **for ever**, or always. **commanded**, or confirmed; established.

*An illustration of design in creation* (v. 5).—The haw of the eye of a horse.—This is not like the *membrana nictitans* of a bird, but it is a cartilage covered convexly by the *membrana conjunctiva:* there is appended to it a mass of fat, and next to the fat is the retractor muscle. Whenever the eye is excited, there is an action of this muscle; the eyeball is retracted, the mass of fat is compressed, and by the compression of this the haw, as it is termed, passes over the eye, so that you never see anything like dirt or an extraneous body in the eye of the horse, unless a bit of grass gets entangled there. But in the most dry road a horse never suffers from dust, as his rider does: and it is owing to this provision of nature, a third eyelid, as it were,

a Four Ps. begin in the same way, cv., cvii., cxviii., cxxxvi.
*b* Comp. Ge. iv. 26; Ex. xxxiii. 19, xxxiv. 5.
*c* The idea of *speaking* is conveyed by the original, rather than merely meditating.
*d* "Seek Him where His mighty strength abides; *i.e.* in His temple in wh. He dwells, and in wh. His face is seen of His worshippers." — *Spk. Com.*
*e Spencer* (1610).
*a* Ex. vi. 6, vii. 4, xii. 12; Ps. cxix. 13.
*b* "It is on this ground, bec. they are Abraham's seed, bec. they are God's chosen, bec. they are Jacob's children, heritors of the covenant and the promises, that they are bound beyond all others to remember what God has done for them." — *Peroune.*
v. 5. *C. Marriott,* ii. 398

which runs over the eye. At the moment the eye is turned inward the haw passes over the eye, and having a glandular secretion, it removes whatever is offensive to the inner corner of the eye, whence it is conveyed out.[c]

9—12. (9) made, or entered into at first.[a] (10) for a law, statute; fixed, inviolable promise. "To have the permanence of perpetual law." (11) lot, marg. *cord*,[b] or measured portion. (12) few in number, the small family and tribe of Abraham is thus referred to: *lit.* "men of number."[c] strangers, Ge. xv. 7.

*Choosing affliction with the people of God* (*v.* 12).—The Rev. H. Venn once told his children that he would take them to see one of the most interesting sights in the world. He would not tell them what it was; but in the evening led them to a miserable hovel, whose ruinous walls and broken windows showed an extreme degree of poverty and want. "Now," said he, "my dear children, can any one that lives in such a wretched habitation as this be happy? Yet this is not all; a poor young man lies there on a miserable straw bed, dying of disease, at the age of nineteen, consumed with fever, and afflicted with nine painful ulcers." "How wretched!" they all exclaimed. He then led them into the cottage, and addressing the poor dying young man, said, "Abraham Midwood, I have brought my children here to show them that it is possible to be happy in a state of disease, and poverty, and want: now, tell them if it is not so." The dying youth, with a sweet smile, replied, "Oh! yes, sir; I would not change my state with that of the richest person on earth who has not those views which I have. Blessed be God! I have a good hope, through Christ, of being admitted into those blessed regions where Lazarus now dwells, having long forgotten all his sorrows and miseries. Sir, this is nothing to bear whilst the presence of God cheers my soul, and whilst I can have access to Him, by constant prayer, through faith in Jesus. Indeed, sir, I am truly happy, and I trust to be happy through eternity; and I every hour thank God, who has brought me from a state of darkness into marvellous light, and has given me to enjoy the unsearchable riches of His grace."[d]

13—16. (13) when .. another, descriptive of the wandering life of the patriarchs.[a] (14) reproved, *etc.*, Pharaoh, Ge. xii. 17; Abimelech, xv. 3, 7, 18. (15) touch not, Ge. xxiv. 11. anointed, *lit.* my messiahs, *i.e.* my chosen, consecrated ones.[b] (16) land, of Canaan: during the residence in it of the patriarchs. Ge. xii. 10, xxvi. 1. staff, Le. xxvi. 26.

*The interest of England* (*vv.* 14, 15).—I. Here is the nearness and dearness of the saints unto God. They are dearer to Him than kings and states. II. Here is the great danger to kings and states, to deal with His saints otherwise than well. III. Here is the care of God over them set out and amplified. 1. By the number and condition of the persons whom He defended; 2. By what He did for them.[c]

*Heavenly guidance* (*v.* 13).—There was once a picture of a little child, in the dress of a pilgrim, walking slowly along a narrow path which was bounded on each side by a terrific precipice, the edges of which were hidden from his view by a luxuriant thicket of fruits and flowers. Behind the child was an angel with a countenance of mixed tenderness and anxiety,

"In contemplation of created things, by steps we may ascend to God."—*Milton.*

*c Sir C. Bell.*

*a* Ge. xvii. 2, xxii. 16, xxvi. 3, xxviii. 13, xxxv. 11; Lu. i. 73; He. vi. 17.

*b* "Line of measurement, and thence the portion assigned by measurement."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* Ge. xxiv. 30.

"God's mercy is so great, that it forgives great sins to great sinners, after great lengths of time, and then gives great favours and great privileges, and raises us up to great enjoyments in the great heaven of the great God. As John Bunyan well says, 'It must be great mercy, or no mercy; for little mercy will never serve my turn.'" —*Spurgeon.*

*d Cheever.*

*a* Ge. xii. 1, 9, xiii. 18, xx. 1; He. xi. 9.

*b* "Consecration to office by anointing is the custom of a later age than that of the patriarchs."—*Spk. Com.*

*vv.* 13—15. *Dr. H. Draper*, iii. 340.

*c T. Goodwin.*

"Sith in the Almightie's everlasting seat, she first was bred, and born of heavenly race, from thence pour'd

down on men by influence of grace."—*Spenser.*

his hands placed lightly on the shoulders of the little pilgrim, as if to keep him in the centre of the path, while the child, having closed his eyes that he might not perceive the tempting snares on either side, is walking calmly forward, content not to see where he plants each footstep, so long as he feels the gentle and guiding touch of the angel upon him. His whole aspect is that of peace, confidence, and conscious safety, so long as he follows the guidance of his heavenly monitor, and presses onward in his way.

[a] For the fig. comp. Ps. cvii. 10.

17–22. (17) **before them,** by gracious providences God prepared for the residence in Egypt. Yet the events all happened naturally and simply. (18) **laid in iron,** marg. "his soul came into iron."[a] No account is given of severity of treatment suffered by Joseph in the prison-house, but the curtailment of his liberty was in itself bitter bondage. (19) **word,** or will; or, word of promise. (20) **sent and loosed,** Ge. xli. 14. (21) **substance,** or possession. (22) **bind,** Joseph's position as head of the state gave him command over all the other officials.

*Wisdom-taught senators* (*v.* 22).—We have here—I. God's instruction to senators. 1. By the life-work of the great and good: 2. By the events in a nation's history; 3. By insight into a nation's deeds. II. God's purpose in the instruction of senators. 1. The entire well-being of a country; 2. Advancement in scientific achievements: 3. Perfection of His creation. Inquire—(1) How far we have wisdom-taught senators; (2) How far our nation is a wise and understanding people.[b]

*A wise senator.*—We doubt whether our country ever before had a cabinet containing a greater number of statesmen known to have religious sympathies. The good works which some of them do in secret—that which they speak in the ear in closets—are sometimes proclaimed on the house-tops. A minister at Rochdale said, that in the course of his visiting the sick, he had had a conversation with an invalid girl, who informed him that Mr. Bright, when at his Rochdale home, often came to read to her from the Bible, and show her what the Saviour so beautifully terms, "the way of life;" "and," added the woman, "he does it as well as a minister." "Why," was the reply, "isn't he a minister—the greatest minister in England?"[c]

[a] "In 215 years the family of Jacob, consisting of 70 persons, grew miraculously, for a special purpose, to the prodigious number of 600,000 men."—*Spk. Com.*

[b] "It must be recollected that the origin of malice was in the Egyptians themselves, lest blame be imputed to God."—*Calvin.*

[c] "Poss. the correct rendering is, They (Moses and Aaron) imposed on them (the Egyptians) the commandments of His signs, *i.e.* they worked among them the signs commanded by God."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

[d] *Murphy.*

23–27. (23) **Israel,** the man Israel, called Jacob in the next sentence. But the name is used to include the tribe. (24) **he increased,**[a] *i.e.* God. (25) **their heart,** *i.e.* the heart of their enemies.[b] (26) **sent Moses,** Ex. iii. 10. (27) **signs,** Heb. "words of his signs."[c]

*Note on the plagues of Egypt* (*v.* 27).—The plagues follow a definite order. (*a*) Nine corrective, one punitive. (*b*) The corrective are divided into three classes of three each. (*c*) In the first of each three the warning is given to Pharaoh in the morning. In the first and second of each three the plague is announced beforehand. In the third of each three it is not announced. (*d*) At the third the magicians acknowledge God; at the sixth they cannot stand before Moses; at the ninth Pharaoh refuses to see Moses again. (*e*) In the first three Aaron uses the rod; in the second three it is not mentioned; in the third three Moses uses it; only in the last his hand is mentioned.[d]

28—32. (28) darkness, Ex. x. 22. they rebelled, *i.e.* Moses and Aaron did not hesitate in their obedience. (29) blood, Ex. vii. 20. (30) frogs, Ex. viii. 6. (31) flies, lice, Ex. viii. 17, 24. (32) hail, Ex. ix. 23.

*Note on the plagues of Egypt.*—Waters into blood, ver. 29.—The first plague, Ex. vii. 20, 21; the Nile is universally used for drinking in Egypt, being remarkably sweet and wholesome. At the beginning of the annual inundation—which, however, is not till June (this was in April)—it assumes a reddish hue, from the sediment brought down by the freshet, and is then kept in jars till it settles clear. Slew their fish.—Showing the preternatural and deadly character of the change. Frogs, ver. 30.—The second plague, Ex. viii. 6: a creature common enough in Egypt, and naturally following the overflow of water, but here miraculously abundant, and, contrary to their usual habits, springing from foul water, and infesting houses, to the intolerable disgust of a nation proverbially cleanly. Flies, ver. 31.—The fourth plague, Ex. viii. 24; naturally bred by the putrid heaps of frogs; perhaps of various (and probably large and malignant) species, as the Heb. word appears to mean mixture. Lice.—Gnats, that is, mosquitoes, a common pest of alluvial regions, especially in tropical climates. This was the third plague, Ex. viii. 17, the order being a little changed here. The fifth and sixth plagues, the murrain and boils, being likewise less important, are omitted in this brief sketch. The jugglery of the Egyptians failed at this point, Ex. viii. 18; the insects were too small for their manipulation, and the other prodigies too grand for them to imitate. Hail, ver. 32.—The seventh plague, Ex. ix. 24; a very uncommon thing in Egypt. Fire.—Lightning; Ex. ix. 23.

33—36. (33) smote, *etc.*, Ex. ix. 13—35. (34) locusts, Ex. x. 1—20. (35) the fruit, both herbs, and leaves of trees. (36) firstborn, Ex. xii. 29.

*Note on the plagues of Egypt.*—Smote vines and trees, ver. 33.—With hailstones, Ex. ix. 25. Ps. lxxviii. 47, speaks of "frost," where the Hebrew word probably means hailstones, but is thought by some to denote a destructive kind of insect, referring to the next plague. Locusts, ver. 34.—The eighth plague, Ex. x. 13—15; a kind of grasshopper (not at all like our summer singing "locusts"), the most destructive thing to Oriental vegetation. Caterpillars.—The same creature in a grub or half-grown state, when it is, if possible, even more voracious. Smote the firstborn, ver. 36.—The tenth and final plague, Ex. xii. 29. This reached every Egyptian hearth and heart, and proved effectual. The saved firstborn Israelites were claimed by Jehovah, Ex. xiii.

37—40. (37) silver and gold, Ex. xii. 35. feeble person, unable to travel, Is. v. 27. (38) glad, Ex. xii. 33. (39) cloud, Ex. xiii. 21. (40) quails, Ex. xvi. 12. bread of heaven, manna, which fell as if out of heaven.

*Note on the plagues of Egypt.*—Mercy is shown in the midst of judgments. (*a*) Mildness precedes infliction. (*b*) Convinces Pharaoh with signs. (*c*) Warns before He strikes, giving the believing a chance to escape, Ex. ix. 18—21. (*d*) Listens to every prayer for reprieve, Ex. viii. 8—25, ix. 27, x. 16. Orderly advance in severity. (*a*) Instructs them. (*b*) Touches their

"What is the human mind, however enriched with acquisition or strengthened by exercise, unaccompanied by an ardent and sensitive heart? Its light may illumine, but it cannot inspire. It may shed a cold and moonlight radiance upon the path of life, but it warms no flower into bloom; it sets free no ice-bound fountain." —*Tuckermann.*

"How mighty is the human heart, with all its complicated energies! This living source of all that moves the world! This temple of liberty, this kingdom of heaven, this altar of God, this throne of goodness, so beautiful in holiness, so generous in love."—*H. Giles.*

"A good heart is the sun and moon, or, rather, the sun, and not the moon, for it shines bright and never changes, but keeps its course truly."—*Shakespeare.*

"Nemesis is one of God's handmaids."—*W. L. Alger.*

*Feeble*, v. 37, *lit.* "stumbling," used fig. for "poor." They should be all wealthy in the full sense of wealthiness, in person and purse. In Isa. xvi. 14, "small and feeble" of the remnant of Moab

—*i.e.* scant in numbers, not mighty.

"This *feeble* wood may him little avail."—*Blind Harry's Wallace.*

"There is no future pang can deal that justice on the self-condemned he deals on his own soul."—*Byron.*

comfort in the first three plagues. (*c*) Their food and support in the second three. (*d*) Their health and safety in the others. Darkness preceding death (plague nine, preceding ten) typifies the moral darkness of the persistently wicked. God is not confined to any set of agencies: for example, uses Moses or Aaron, or both—the rod or not. Human helps fail in the problem of sin: the magicians soon give up, helpless. God's treatment, misused, hardens: for example, Pharaoh; also Heb. xii. 11. God can use the weakest instruments: for example, frogs, flies, lice, etc. Also 1 Cor. i. 27, 28. The plagues were ordered, to enthrone Jehovah as God and Lord. Ex. vii. 17, ix. 14. (*a*) Superiority of Moses over the magicians. (*b*) Struck the idols of Egypt, for example. The lice unfitted the priest for sacrifice; the Nile, the frog, the fly, the bull, the ram, the goat, and the sun were all worshipped. (*c*) He spared Israel. (*d*) Gave them confidence. God will punish His enemies and deliver His friends.

41—45. (41) **opened the rock,** at Rephidim. Ex. xvii. 1. 2. At Kadesh, Nu. xx. 11.[a] (42) **remembered,** *etc.*, Ex. ii. 24. (43) **gladness,** poss. alluding to the song sung after crossing the Red Sea.[b] (44) **labour,** put for the fruits of labour, their cities, vineyards, treasures, *etc.* (45) **they,** *etc.*, *i.e.* the people of Israel.[c]

*Curious facts about water.*—The extent to which water mingles with bodies apparently the most solid is very wonderful. The glittering opal, which beauty wears as an ornament, is only flint and water. Of every 1,200 tons of earth which a landlord has on his estate, 400 are water. The snow-capped summits of Snowdon and Ben Nevis have many million tons of water in a solidified form. In every plaster of Paris statue which an Italian carries through our streets for sale there is one pound of water to four pounds of chalk. The air we breathe contains five grains of water to each cubic foot of its bulk. The potatoes and turnips which are boiled for our dinner have, in their raw state, the one seventy-five per cent. and the other ninety per cent. of water. If a man weighing ten stone were squeezed in an hydraulic press, seven and a half stone of water would run out, and only two and a half of dry residue remain. A man is, chemically speaking, forty-five pounds of carbon and nitrogen, diffused though five and a half pailfuls of water. In plants we find water thus mingling no less wonderfully. A sunflower evaporates one and a quarter pints of water a day, and a cabbage about the same quantity. A wheat plant exhales in 175 days, about 100,000 grains of water. An acre of growing wheat, on this calculation, draws and passes out ten tons of water per day. The sap of the plant is the medium through which the mass of fluid is conveyed. It forms a delicate pump, up which it flows with the rapidity of a swift stream. By the action of the sap various properties may be assimilated to the growing plant. Timber in France is, for instance, dyed by various colours being mixed with water, and sprinkled over the roots of the trees. Dahlias are also coloured by a similar process.[d]

*a* Ps. lxxviii. 15, 16, 20; 1 Co. x. 4. *b* Is. xxxv. 10. *c* "This was God's purpose, that Israel should be a holy nation in the midst of other nations, a priesthood representing the world, and claiming it for God as His world."—*Perowne.* *v.* 41. *C. Bradley,* 32.

*vv.* 44, 45. *Dr. H. Killigrew,* 207. *v.* 45. *G. Whitefield,* v. 79.

"As freely as the firmament embraces the world, so mercy must encircle friend and foe. The sun pours forth impartially his beams through all the regions of infinity; heaven bestows the dew equally on every thirsty plant. Whatever is good and comes from on high is universal and without reserve; but in the heart's recessed darkness dwells."—*Schiller. d Teacher's Treasury.*

## PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SIXTH.

author,—unknown: date, after the return from captivity

1–5. (1) praise, Heb. *hallelujah*. From this beginning the Ps. is classed as the first of the Hallelujah Psalms.[a] good, in His gracious dealing with men. mercy, or graciousness, loving-kindness. for ever, in generation after generation. (2) utter, *i.e.* sufficiently and worthily. (3) keep judgment, better, "keep the right."[b] (4) remember me, a personal plea to be permitted to share in God's blessings to His people. favour . . people, *lit.* "in the favour of Thy people," or "in the time of Thy showing favour to Thy people." (5) chosen, plural, "chosen ones."

*God's favour to His people* (*v.* 4).—I. What this prayer implies. 1. That God is the hearer and the answerer of prayer; 2. That He has a peculiar people; 3. That He regards His people with a special love. II. What this prayer expresses. 1. A real participation of God's love to His own people; 2. A full participation of God's love to His own people; 3. A personal participation of God's love to His own people.[c]

*God visiting and saving His people* (*v.* 4).—Dr. Doddridge was riding on horseback down a steep, rocky pathway, when his horse suddenly stumbled and fell, throwing the doctor violently from the saddle. The place was so dangerous, and the fall so violent, that his escape (for he was scarcely hurt at all) seemed positively miraculous. Some time after the doctor had a dream. He thought he died and went to heaven, where he was first conducted to a lofty and spacious hall, the walls of which were covered with paintings and inscriptions. On examining these more closely, he was astonished to find that they comprised a complete history of his own life. Among the scenes depicted was the one just referred to, and he now saw the reason of his apparently miraculous escape; just as he fell from his horse an angel caught him in his arms. It was only a dream, but it illustrates the point.

6–9. (6) we have sinned, this is the key-note of the Ps., which is one of *confession*.[a] with our fathers, so the Psalmist "regards the nation as a whole, one in guilt, and one in punishment."[b] (7) wonders, miracles of judgment and deliverance. provoked him, Ex. xiv. 11, 12. (8) name's sake, Ex. xiv. 18. (9) rebuked, comp. Ps. civ. 7; Is. l. 2. depths, left exposed by the retreating sea. God's way through the ocean depths was as safe for them as through the wilderness.[c]

*Why are men saved?* (*v.* 8).—I. Here is a glorious Saviour. II. The favoured persons. These people were—1. Stupid; 2. Ungrateful; 3. Provoking. III. The reason of salvation. 1. To manifest His nature; 2. To vindicate His name. IV. The obstacles overcome in saving them. 1. The claims of law; 2. The demands of conscience; 3. The great accuser.[d]

*Salvation illustrated* (*v.* 8).—About the time when the Gospel was beginning to make its way in Raiatea, one of the South Sea Islands, a canoe, with four men in it, was upset at sea, and the people were thrown into the water. Two of the men, having embraced Christianity, immediately cried, "Let us pray to Jehovah; for He can save us." "Why did you not pray to Him

*Sub., Israel's unfaithfulness and God's faithfulness.*

*a* Ps. cxi.–cxiii., cxvii., cxxxv., cxlvi–cl.

*b Delitzsch.*

"If any distinction is to be made between *keeping judgment* and *doing righteousness*, the first may describe inward rectitude, the second its outward exhibition in act."—*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 4. *Dr. W. Wilson*, 45; *E. Cooper*, v. 345; *A. Roberts*, i. 266.

*c G. Brooks.*

*a* Comp. 1 Ki. viii. 47; Da. ix. 5.

*b Perowne.*

"Israel was bearing at this time the punishment of its sins, by which it had made itself like its forefathers."—*Delitzsch.*

*c* Is. li. 10, lxiii. 13, Na. i. 4.

*v.* 7. *Dr. R. South*, ix. 98.

*v.* 8. *N. Homes*, 577; *W. Bridge*, iv. 373; *R. Erskine*, v. 167.

*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

"The sun is the eye of the world,

and he is indifferent to the negro or the cold Russian, to them that dwell under the line, and them that stand near the tropics, the scalped Indian or the poor boy that shakes at the foot of the Riphian hills; so is the mercy of God."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

sooner?" replied their pagan comrades: "here we are in the water, and it is useless to pray now." The Christians, however, did cry mightily unto their God, while all four were clinging for life to the broken canoe. In this situation a shark suddenly rushed towards them, and seized one of the two idolaters. His companions held him as fast and as long as they could; but the monster prevailed, and hurried the unfortunate victim into the abyss, marking the track with his blood. After some time, the tide bore the surviving three to the reef, when, just as they were cast upon it, a second shark snatched the other idolater in his jaws, and carried off his prey, shrieking in vain for assistance, which the two Christians, themselves struggling with the breakers, could not afford him. This circumstance made a great impression on the minds of their countrymen, and powerfully recommended to them "the God that heareth prayer."

10—15. (10) **him that hated**, the Egyptian Pharaoh. (11) **waters covered**, Ex. xiv. 28. (12) **sang his praise**, Ex. xv. (13) **soon forgat**, Ex. xv. 24, xvi. 2. *Heb.* "they made haste, they forgat." (14) **lusted exceedingly**, *lit.* "lusted for themselves a lust," Nu. xi. 4. **tempted**, "tried to constrain God with their importunate, eager desire."[a] (15) **leanness**,[b] LXX. trans. *satiety.* The Heb. term is used to describe the effects of the plague, or withering sickness.

*Soul-leanness* (*v.* 15).—The text leads us to consider soul-leanness in two aspects. I. As existing in connection with material prosperity. 1. This combination is general; 2. It is deplorable. II. As existing because of material prosperity. 1. Not because it is Divinely designed to do so; 2. Not because there is any inherent tendency to do so.[c]

*Prayer for wrong things* (*v.* 15).—Chactas, the blind old sachem in Chateaubriand's Wertherion romance, is made to bring the story to an end by relating a parable to his woe-fraught young listener. It tells how the Meschacebé, soon after leaving its source among the hills, began to feel weary of being a simple brook, and so asked for snows from the mountains, water from the torrents, rain from the tempests, until, its petitions granted, it burst its bounds and ravaged its hitherto delightsome banks. At first the proud stream exulted in its force, but seeing ere long that it carried desolation in its flow, that its progress was now doomed to solitude, and that its waters were for ever turbid, it came to regret the humble bed hollowed out for it by nature, the birds, the flowers, the trees, and the brooks, hitherto the modest companions of its tranquil course.[d]

16—18. (16) **envied Moses**, Nu. xvi., xvii. **saint**, the Heb. term denotes official sanctity—that derived from a Divine consecration. (17) **opened**, Nu. xvi. 30, 32, xxvi. 10. **covered**, Nu. xvi. 35. (18) **fire**, Nu. xvi. 2, 35. **wicked**, Nu. xvi. 26.

*Ministerial envy* (*v.* 16).—Will any workman malign another because he helpeth him to do his Master's work? Yet, alas, how common is this heinous crime amidst men of parts and eminency in the Church! They can secretly blot the reputation of such as stand cross to their own; and what they cannot for shame do in plain and open terms, lest they be proved palpable liars and slanderers, they will do in general and malicious intentions, raising suspicions where they cannot fasten accusations. And

*a Syk. Com.* "Six distinct cases of rebellion are enumerated as occurring between the time of the passage of the Red Sea, and that of the entry into Canaan."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* "This may refer to the loathing of food, followed by great mortality, the *soul* being here used only in a physical sense of the life. But the fig. sense is equally true, and equally pertinent. The very heart and spirit of a man, when bent only or supremely on the satisfaction of its earthly desires and appetites, is always dried up and withered."—*Perowne.*

*c Dr. Thomas.*

*d F. Jacox.*

*v.* 16. *Bp. G. Williams*, 185.

"Envy is the daughter of pride, the author of murder and revenge, the beginner of secret sedition, and the perpetual tormentor of virtue. Envy is the filthy slime of the soul; a ve-

so far are some gone in this satanical vice that it is their common practice, and a considerable part of their business, to keep down the estimation of those they dislike, and defame others in the slyest and most plausible way; and some go so far that they are unwilling that any that are abler than themselves should come into their pulpits, lest they should be applauded above themselves. A fearful thing that any man who hath the least of the fear of God should so envy at God's gifts, and had rather that his carnal hearers were unconverted, and the drowsy not awakened, than that it should be done by another, who may be preferred before him. Yea, so far does this cursed vice prevail, that in great congregations, that have need of the help of many teachers, we can scarcely get two in equality to live together in love and quietness, and unanimously to carry on the work of God! But unless one of them be quite below the other in parts, and content to be so esteemed, or unless one be a curate to the other and ruled by him, they are contending for precedency, and envying each other's interest, and walking with strangeness and jealousy towards each other, to the shame of the profession, and the great wrong of the congregation.[a]

19—23. (19) **made a calf**, Ex. xxxii. 4. (20) **their glory**, Him who was their glory: Jehovah, their glorious God.[a] (21) **forgat God**, against this they had been duly warned, see De. iv. 16—18. (22) **land of Ham**, Ps. lxxviii. 51, cv. 23, 27. (23) **destroy them**, Ex. xxxii. 10.[b]

*The golden calf* (*v.* 19).—I. The circumstances of the Israelites at Horeb were strikingly analogous to those of a large portion of mankind at the present day. 1. They had witnessed a terrible display of the Divine character; 2. They had just given a solemn response to God's covenant. II. Consider their conduct as analogous to much that is passing in the world around us. III. There is a further analogy in the enhancement of guilt in both cases. IV. God did not suffer this sin of the Israelites to go unpunished; neither can those who are guilty of a similar sin at the present day expect to escape punishment.[c]

*Forgotten mercies* (*v.* 21).—God accounts those mercies forgotten which are not written with legible characters in our lives (Ps. cvi. 21), "They forgat God their Saviour." That of Joshua is observable (chap. viii. 32). Upon their victory over the city Ai, an altar is built as a monument of that signal mercy; now mark, what doth God command to be writ or engraved upon the stones thereof? One would have thought the history of that day's work should have been the sculpture; but it is the "copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel" (*v.* 32); whereby He plainly showed the best way of remembering the mercy was not to forget to keep the law.[d]

24—27. (24) **despised**, *etc.*,[a] Nu. xiii., xiv. The occasion referred to is the visit and report of the spies. **his word**, of assurance and promise that they should possess it. (25) **murmured**, Nu. xiv. 2. (26) **lifted .. hand**, the attitude of one taking an oath, Nu. xiv. 30.[b] (27) **overthrow**, make to fall.[c]

*A rebellious heart subdued.*—When almost all at the court of St. Petersburg were agitated with the threatened invasion by French troops, Prince Galitzin maintained calmness. His com-

nom, a poison, or quicksilver which consumeth the flesh, and drieth up the narrow of the bones."—*Socrates.* "Dionysius the tyrant," says Plutarch, "out of envy, punished Philoxenius, the musician, because he could sing, and Plato, the philosopher, because he could dispute, better than himself."—*J. Whitecross.*

*a Baxter.*

*a* Comp. Je. ii. 11. "Glory, like light, is used in Scrip. to denote the Divine perfections."—*Perowne.*

*b* "Had not Moses His chosen stood before Him in the gap, as a valiant soldier guarding His city when a breach is made in the wall, and stayed Him by prayers and entreaties, lest He should destroy them?"—*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 21. *Dr. W. Landon*, 93.

*c Dr. W. B. Sprague.*

*d Gurnall*

*a* Je. iii. 19; Zec. vii. 14.

*b* Ge. xiv. 22; Ex. vi. 8; De. xxxii. 40.

*c* Le. xxvi. 38; De. xxviii. 64.

"There are many people the bril-

fancy of whose minds only depend upon the heart. When they open that it is hardly possible for it not to throw out some fire."—*Desmahis.*

"How easy it is for one benevolent being to diffuse pleasure around him; and how truly is a kind heart a fountain of goodness, making everything in its vicinity to freshen into smiles!"—*W. Irving.*

"There is no greater punishment than that of being abandoned to oneself."—*Pasquier Quesnel.*

panions were astonished. Had he become a traitor? It could not be; his loyalty was undoubted. At this crisis he thought it his duty to acquaint the Emperor Alexander with the rock on which he rested. He asked an interview. The invasion was naturally first introduced, and next, as closely connected with it, the prince's conduct. The emperor demanded upon what principle he remained calm in the midst of universal alarm. The prince drew from his pocket a small Bible, and held it towards the emperor. As the latter put out his hand to receive the book, it fell, and opened at Psalm xci. "Oh, that your majesty would seek this retreat!" said the prince, as he read the words of the Psalm. A day was appointed for public prayer. The minister who preached took for his subject the ninety-first Psalm. Alexander inquired of the prince, with surprise, if he had mentioned the circumstances that had occurred at their interview. He assured him that he had not. A short time after, the emperor, having a few minutes to spare, sent for his chaplain to read the Bible to him in his tent. He came, and commenced reading the ninety-first Psalm. "Hold!" said the czar; "who told you to read that?" "God," replied the chaplain. "How?" exclaimed Alexander. "Surprised at your sending for me," continued the chaplain, "I fell upon my knees before God, and besought Him to teach my weak lips what to speak. I felt that part of the holy Word which I have begun to read clearly pointed out to me. Why your majesty interrupted me I know not." The result was a great change in the emperor's conduct, and he showed much zeal in the circulation of God's Word.

28—31. (28) **Baal-peor,** Nu. xxv. 3. "The Moabite idol[a] worshipped on the summit of Peor." **of the dead,** offered to the dead, or lifeless objects of heathen worship.[b] (29) **inventions,** Ps. xcix. 8. **brake in,** or made a breach. The image is that of a river wh. has burst its barriers.[c] (30) **Phinehas,** Nu. xxv. 7, 8. (31) **counted,** *etc.*,[d] comp. the similar expression, Ge. xv. 6.

*Fidelity illustrated* (*v.* 30).—The celebrated Theodore Beza was deeply wrought upon in his younger years by Psalm xci., at the church of Charenton. Listening to an exposition of it, he found these inspired words singularly sweet to him, and was enabled to appropriate the promises to himself with a comfortable assurance that the Lord would make good to him all that is here pledged. When past fourscore years of age, he bore witness to the faithfulness of the Most High. These engagements, he declared, had been verified. He set his seal to the testimony that as, at the early period referred to, he had been graciously helped to adopt the second verse as his own, taking the Lord for his God, his refuge and fortress, he had found Him to be wonderfully such in all the after changes of life: that He had delivered him from the snare of the fowler, and the noisome pestilence, when his life had often been in danger from the lying-in-wait of enemies, and sometimes from a sweeping epidemic; that amidst the fierce civil wars of France, he had had many singular deliverances from danger, while attending Protestant princes on the battle-fields where thousands fell around him. Not long before his death he went through all the promises of this Psalm, dwelling on their fulfilment in his behalf, saying how he had found the Lord did give His angels charge over him; how the Lord had

[a] "Called *Kemosh.*"—*Hengstenberg.*

[b] 1 Co. viii. 4.

[c] Ex. xix. 24.

[d] "The act of Phinehas was counted a righteous act for ever memorable, and rewarded by God with a perpetual priesthood."—*Spk. Com.*

"It appears that the high priesthood was confined to the line of Phinehas from his own time to the fall of Jerusalem, if we except the high priesthood of Eli, the descendant of Ishamar, uncle of Phinehas."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 28. *H. Moore,* 419.

*vv.* 29, 30. *Bp. Andrews,* v. 223; *Bp. Sanderson,* 133; *Dr. M. Hole,* ii. 31.

answered when he called upon Him in his trouble, yea, had satisfied him with long life. "And now," said he, "I have no more to wait for but the last, 'I will show him my salvation,' and for the fulfilment of that I am now waiting."

32—35. (32) waters of strife, Nu. xx. 13. went ill, De. i. 37, iii. 26, xxxii. 50, 51. (33) spake unadvisedly, Nu. xx. 10—12. (34) not destroy, *etc.*, see Ex. xxiii. 31—33, xxxiv. 12, 13; Jos. xxiii. 12, 13; Ju. i., ii. 1—3. (35) mingled, mixed themselves with them by intermarriage.[a] works, bad works; their immoralities.

*Unadvised words* (*v.* 33).—Colonel Montgomery was shot in a duel about a dog; Captain Ramsay in one about a servant; Mr. Fetherstone in one about a recruit; Sterne's father in one about a goose; and another gentleman in one about "an acre of anchovies." One officer was challenged for merely asking his opponent to enjoy the second goblet; another was compelled to fight about a pinch of snuff. General Barry was challenged by a Captain Smith for declining a glass of wine with him at a dinner in a steam-boat, although the General had pleaded as an excuse that wine invariably made his stomach sick at sea; and Lieut. Crowther lost his life in a duel, because he was refused admission to a club of pigeon-shooters! What contemptible folly in men it is to risk their lives in order to settle such trivial disputes as these! And then how does the result of a duel really settle the dispute any more than the result of jumping together from a precipice, or any similar jeopardy of life and limb?[b]

36—39. (36) a snare, Ex. xxiii. 33; Ju. ii. 2, 3, 11. (37) devils,[a] lit. *lords*,[b] i.e. false gods. (38) polluted, the strongest word. Nu. xxxv. 33. "The land, the very soil itself, was polluted and accursed, as well as the inhabitants." (39) own works, acts of wilfulness, not of obedience to God. The idolatrous rites were men's inventions, not God's appointments. went a whoring, Ex. xxxiv. 14, 15.

*Patronising idolatry in India.*—It is lamentable to think how long after our power was firmly established in Bengal, we, grossly neglecting the first and plainest duty of the civil magistrate, suffered the practices of infanticide and suttee to continue unchecked. We decorated the temples of the false gods; we provided the dancing girls; we gilded and painted the images to which our ignorant subjects bowed down; we repaired and embellished the car under the wheels of which crazy devotees flung themselves at every festival to be crushed to death; we sent guards of honour to escort pilgrims to the places of worship; we actually made oblations at the shrines of idols. All this was considered, and is still considered, by some prejudiced Anglo-Indians of the old school, as profound policy. I believe that there never was so shallow, so senseless a policy. We gained nothing by it. We lowered ourselves in the eyes of those whom we meant to flatter. We led them to believe that we attached no importance to the difference between Christianity and heathenism. Yet how vast that difference is! I altogether abstain from alluding to topics which belong to divines; I speak merely as a politician, anxious for the morality and the temporal well-being of society: and so speaking, I say that to countenance the Brahminical idolatry, and to discountenance that religion which

*a* Ju. iii. 6. "According to Solomon, life and death are in the power of the tongue; and as Euripides truly affirmeth, every unbridled tongue in the end shall find itself unfortunate; for in all that ever I observed in the course of worldly things, I ever found that men's fortunes are oftener made by their tongues than by their virtues, and more men's fortunes overthrown thereby, also than by their vices."—*Sir W. Raleigh.*
*b Cheever.*

*a* LXX. trans. *daimoniois*, and Jerome *dæmonibus*, whence our Eng. Ver. has *devils*.

*b* 1 Co. viii. 5. "We cannot describe the natural history of the soul, but we know that it is Divine. All things are known to the soul. It is not to be surprised by any communication. Nothing can be greater than it, let those fear and those fawn who will. The soul is in her native realm; and it is wider than space, older than time, wide as hope, rich as love. Pusillanimity and fear she refuses with a beautiful scorn; they are not for her who putteth on her coronation robes, and goes out through

universal power." — *Emerson.*

[e] *Ld. Macaulay.*

has done so much to promote justice, and mercy, and freedom, and arts, and sciences, and good government, and domestic happiness, which has struck off the chains of the slave, which has mitigated the horrors of war, which has raised women from servants and playthings into companions and friends, is to commit high treason against humanity and civilisation.[e]

[a] Ju. ii. 14, iii 12, 13, x. 7—9; Ps. lxxviii. 59—61.

[b] Comp. Ju. iii. 30, iv. 23, viii. 28, xi. 33.

40—43. (40) **he abhorred**, the feelings characteristic of man can only by accommodation be applied to God. (41) **gave . . heathen**, as recorded in the Book of Judges.[a] (42) **subjection**, they were bowed down.[b] (43) **with their counsel**, wh. was not His counsel, though that they should have sought. **brought low**, Le. xxvi. 39.

*The meanness of idolatry.*—

Worshipped God meanly, as though knowable
Through generative energies and powers;
Not as man's great regenerative Lord.
For life was of the angels, as was law:
But love in place of law, in lieu of life
The immortality of heaven, Christ gave.
Hence what, in false faiths, energies were deemed,
Are never more than symbols in the true.
God's omnipresence seems not sensuous;
Unless He be in us, we are not in Him.
Signify all things; nothing represents.
And therefore were the chosen race alone,
To whom the godly secret was confined,
Lapsing from faith, rebuked and charged with sin.
The general world, unconscious pietists
Of falsest creeds and errors, God allowed
To live on, unreproved, till came the time
When all the mysteries of heaven and earth
Were put in evolution; are but now
Fulfilling.[c]

[c] *Bp. Gibson*, 93.

"Making one object in outward or inward nature more holy to a single heart is reward enough for a life; for the more sympathies we gain or waken for what is beautiful, by so much deeper will our sympathy be for that which is most beautiful — the human soul." —*Lowell.*

[a] 2 Kl. xxv. 27; Ne. i. 11; Je. xlii. 12; Da. i. 9.

[b] *Simeon.*

"There is a kind of gratitude in thanks, though it be barren, and bring forth but words." — *Southern.*

"Words would but wrong the gratitude I owe you; should I begin to speak, my soul's so full, that I should talk of nothing else all day." —*Otway.*

"The rain as it falls from the firmament is never poisonous; but by the time it filters through strata filled with lead or copper, it may become so

44—48. (44, 45) **remembered**, *etc.*, Le. xxvi. 41, 42. **repented**, De. xxxii. 36; Ps. xc. 13. (46) **pitied**, *etc.*, comp. 1 Kings. viii. 50.[a] (47) **save us**, this prayer is appropriate to those still in exile, and helps to fix the date of the Psalm. (48) **blessed**, *etc.*, a doxology, prob. added by some later hand.

*Praise to God for His mercies* (*v.* 48).—Behold—I. The ebullition of heart here manifested. 1. What is it that the Psalmist has been contemplating? 2. And was not all this a ground for praise and thanksgiving? From hence we may clearly see—II. The corresponding feeling which it should generate in us. 1. We have experienced an infinitely greater redemption than they; 2. And yet we have been as rebellious as ever they were; 3. Yet is God more merciful to us than ever He was to them: 4. What then should be our sense of gratitude towards Him? Address—(1) Those who are not yet liberated from their bondage; (2) Those who have been brought into the liberty of the children of God.[b]

*Thankfulness* (*v.* 48).—Will you accompany me to learn a lesson of thankfulness for God's mercies? Turn under this low archway, climb these narrow winding stairs, two pairs, knock at that door, and a cheerful, pleasant voice will bid you enter. The room is clean, even airy; a bright little fire burns in the grate;

and, in a four-post bed, you will see sitting up a woman of sixty-four years of age, with her hands folded and contracted, and her whole body crippled and curled together, as the disease cramped it and rheumatism has fixed it for eight-and-twenty years. For sixteen of these years she has not moved from her bed, or looked out of the window, or even lifted her hand to her own face, and also is in constant pain, while she cannot move a limb. But listen! "She is so thankful that God has left her that great blessing, the use of one thumb!" Her left hand is clenched and stiff, and utterly useless; but she has a two-pronged fork fastened to a stick with which she can take off her great, old-fashioned spectacles, and put them on again, with amazing effort. By the same means she can feed herself, and she can sip her tea through a tube, helping herself with this one thumb. And there is another thing she can accomplish with her fork; she can turn over the leaves of a large Bible, when placed within her reach. She has never in her life seen a hayrick, a wood, or a cornfield. . . . . A recent visitor addressed her with the remark that she was all alone. "Yes," she replied, in a peculiarly sweet and cheerful voice, "I am alone, and yet not alone." "How is that?" "I feel that the Lord is constantly with me." How long have you lain here?" "For sixteen years and four months, and for two years and four months I have not been lifted out of my bed to have it made; yet I have much to praise and bless the Lord for." "What is the source of your happiness?" "The thought that my sins are forgiven, and dwelling on the great love of Jesus my Saviour. I am content to lie here so long as it shall please Him that I should stay, and to go whenever He shall call me." . . . . How true, the string of the loving-kindness of the Lord once touched, note after note prolonged the song of praise![c]

pernicious that whosoever drinks of the water dies. The juice of the grape, as it flows from the fermenting vat, is generous wine; but if the wine-skin which receives it is old and musty, or if it be poured into a jar of acidulous pottery, it soon grows sour and vapid. Gifts as they come from God are always good and perfect; but by the time that they have distilled through our murmuring spirits, they assume another character."—*Dr. J. Hamilton.*

"And, with them, words of so sweet breath composed, as made the things more rich; their perfume lost, take these again; for to the noble mind rich gifts wax poor when givers prove unkind."—*Shakespeare.*

*c Book and its Mission.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SEVENTH.*

author,—unknown: date, time of return fr. exile

*Subj., Jehovah's goodness to those who call upon Him.*

**1—3.** (1) **good,** Ps. cvi. 1.[a] (2) **redeemed,** as in Is. lxii. 12. (3) **all lands,** all parts of Babylon, and all other countries where temporary refuge had been found. **the south,** *lit.* "the sea," *i.e.* the Red Sea, lying south of Palestine.[b]

*Praise to God for redemption* (*vv.* 1—3).—I. The duty of all to give thanks to God. 1. The grounds of it; 2. The duty itself. II. The peculiar obligations of the redeemed to do so. Think—1. From whence you have been gathered; 2. By what means ye were redeemed; 3. To what ye are brought. Address—(1) Those who are yet insensible of God's goodness; (2) Those who love the blessed work.[c]

*The loss of redemption.*—There are sometimes rare and beautiful wares brought into the market that are invoiced at almost fabulous rates. Ignorant people wonder why they are priced so high. The simple reason is that they cost so much to procure. That luxurious article labelled £200 was procured by the adventurous hunter, who, at the hazard of his neck, brought down the wild mountain goat, out of whose glossy hair the fabric was wrought. Yonder pearl that flashes on the brow of the bride is precious because it was rescued from the great deep at the risk of the pearl-fisher's life, as he was lifted into the boat half-dead,

*a* Je. xxxiii. 11.

*b* "The poet prefers to indicate a chief physical feature of the country lying below Palestine instead of its actual direction. . . . . The sea here cannot mean the Dead Sea, for the region fr. wh. those redeemed are

gathered must surely be beyond the borders of Palestine."—*Jennings and Lowe.*
See *W. Romaine*, iv. 1.
*v.* 1. *J. Garnons*, ii. 1; *C. Bulkley*, 217; *Dr. G. Fothergill*, i. 115; *C. Wells*, ii. 370.
*v.* 2. *Bp. Fleetwood*, 681.
*c C. Simeon.*
*d T. Cuyler.*

*a* "Travel in distant, unexplored regions may be meant, enforced of necessity or by foreign compulsion..... All such miserable wanderers are admonished that chance does not direct their steps, but God's mercy redeems."—*Calvin.*

*b* "The original words, by their order and grammatical form, seem to express that the cry for help was followed immediately by help."—*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 6. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 254.
*v.* 7. *J. Hill*, 166; *W. Jay*, iv. 110; *W. Meyers*, 89.
*c W. M. in Analyst.*
*d W. W. Whythe.*
*e Carne's Letters.*

*a* "Let them praise to Jahve His goodness, and His wonders to the children of men."—*Delitzsch.*
*v.* 8. *Dr. J. Lawson*, 237; *Dr. W. Leechman*, ii. 25.
*v.* 9. *C. Mayo*, 98.
*b C. H. Spurgeon.*
Dr. Johnson once reproved the Rev. Dr. Maxwell for saying grace in his presence without mentioning the name

with the blood gushing from his nostrils. Yonder ermine, flung so carelessly over the proud beauty's shoulder, cost terrible battles with polar ice and hurricane. All choicest things are reckoned the dearest. So is it, too, in heaven's inventories. The universe of God has never witnessed aught to be reckoned in comparison with the redemption of a guilty world. That mighty ransom no such contemptible things as silver and gold could procure. Only by one price could the Church of God be redeemed from hell, and that the precious blood of the Lamb—the Lamb without blemish or spot—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.[d]

4—7. (4) **they**, *i.e.* ancient Israel. **solitary way**, *lit.* "waste of a way;" *i.e.* in a desert track.[a] (5) **hungry**, *etc.*, suitable description of the desert experiences. **fainted**, *lit.* covered itself, as with darkness, sorrow, and the like. (6) **then they cried**, when pressed by the utmost need.[b] (7) **led them**, "caused them to journey." **city of habitation**, or "where men dwell;" and where they might settle.

*The way of the redeemed* (*v.* 7).—I. The way of the redeemed—1. Long; 2. Difficult; 3. Lonely; 4. A desert way. II. The rectitude of the way. It is the right way. Consider—1. That it is the Divine way: 2. To what it leads. Learn:—(1) Take an enlarged view of the Divine conduct—think of the goal as well as the way; (2) Ever seek the Divine guidance.[c]—*The right way* (*v.* 7).—I. The right way is not always a pleasant way. 1. Long; 2. Difficult; 3. Lonely; 4. Hazardous. II. The right way is always the best way. 1. God is our leader; 2. Heaven is the goal.[d]

*Thirst* (*v.* 5).—"Fatigued with heat and thirst, we came to a few cottages in a palm-wood, and stopped to drink of a fountain of delicious water. In this northern climate no idea can be formed of the exquisite luxury of drinking in Egypt: little appetite for food is felt; but when, after crossing the burning sands, you reach the rich line of woods on the brink of the Nile, and pluck the fresh limes, and, mixing their juice with Egyptian sugar and the soft river water, drink repeated bowls of lemonade, you feel that every other pleasure of the senses must yield to this. One then perceives the beauty and force of those similes in Scripture, where the sweetest emotions of the heart are compared to the assuaging of thirst in a sultry land."[e]

8—11. (8) **oh that**, *etc.*,[a] the refrain of the Ps. (9) **longing soul**, comp. Is. xxix. 8. (10) **sit . . iron**, the figs. of this *v.* are applied to Joseph's imprisonment (Ps. cv. 18); comp. Is. ix. 2; Job xxxvi. 8. (11) **rebelled**, against the messages of the prophets.

*Praising God* (*v.* 8).—I. Let us daily praise God for common mercies; common as we frequently call them, and yet so priceless, that when deprived of them we are ready to perish. II. The sweetest and the loudest note in our songs of praise should be of redeeming love.[b]

*Thoughtfulness taught by a bird* (*v.* 8).—I remember reading the following very striking fact. It illustrates a common state of mind, and may be of essential service to my reader. One Sabbath morning in winter, a man who had lived in utter neglect of God went out after breakfast to take a walk round his garden.

A quantity of snow had fallen, and the ground was covered completely over. As he passed down one of the walks, his eye lighted upon a little bird that was cowering under a bush, apparently suffering both from cold and hunger. He merely looked at the little creature, and passed on. After a while he returned, and his attention was attracted by the loud and beautiful notes of the same little bird which he had previously seen. It was still on the snow, but now singing as if incapable of containing its exuberant delight. He turned aside to see if he could discover what was the cause of this remarkable change, and he found that the little songster, having discovered a small morsel of food among the snow, was singing its song of gratitude over it, ere it partook of the scanty meal. His heart quailed at the sight. He felt overpowered with the flood of convicting thought that rushed over his mind. He thought within himself, "I have risen from a comfortable bed; I have enjoyed a plentiful repast; I have walked out to enjoy the refreshing air, and not one feeling of gratitude has been excited in my breast; while here is a poor famishing bird making the walks of the morning vocal with its song of thanksgiving for a morsel discovered on the snow!" Such were, in substance, his thoughts. He went into his house deeply convinced of his hateful ingratitude. He turned in heart to his God, and through the knowledge of God he became a new man.[c]

12—14. (12) with labour, or trouble, misery. fell down, *lit.* stumbled. (13) then, *etc.*, as *v.* 6. (14) darkness, *etc.*, as *v.* 10.

*The hope of God's presence in trouble.*—Writing to his wife the night before the attack on the Redan, October 7th, 1858, Captain Maxie M. Hammond, in a postscript, says: "I have had a peaceful time for prayer, and have committed the keeping of my soul and body to the Lord my God, and have commended to His care my wife and child, my parents, brothers, and sisters, and all dear to me. Come what will, all is well. This day will be a memorable one. Farewell once more! Psalm xci. 15, is my text for to-day, especially the words, 'I will be with him in trouble.'"

15—20. (15) oh that, as *v.* 8. (16) broken .. sunder, comp. Is. xl. 2. (17) fools, *etc.*,[a] a general statement suggested by the special instances just recalled to mind. For term fool, see Ps. xiv. 1: wilful transgressors. are afflicted, or bring on themselves affliction. (18) soul, *etc.*, Job xxxiii. 20, 22. (19) then, *etc.*, *v.* 13. (20) destructions, grave-pits, Job xxxiii. 18; La. iv. 20.

*Divine faithfulness.*—The Rev. John Brown, of Edinburgh, in his last sickness, had this question put to him: "Do you remember who it was that said on his death-bed that God had fulfilled all the promises in the ninety-first Psalm but the last, 'His eyes shall see my salvation,' and now he was going to receive the accomplishment of that, too?" Dr. Brown replied, "No;" and added, raising his voice, "but I know a man to whom almost all the lines of that Psalm have been sweet. I think, if ever God touched my heart, He went through that Psalm with me."

21—24. (21) oh that, *v.* 8. (22) rejoicing, or singing. (23) go down,[a] or traverse the sea. business, that of fishermen, traders, passengers, as well as sailors. (24) wonders, those of storm and calm, as indicated in *v.* 25.[b]

of the Lord Jesus Christ; and hoped he would be more mindful in future of the apostolical injunction.

"From David we learn to give thanks in everything. Every furrow in the Book of Psalms is sown with seeds of thanksgiving."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

*c J. Kirk.*

"Those who bestow too much application on trifling things, become generally incapable of great ones."—*La Rochefoucauld.*

"Almost every one takes pleasure in repaying trifling obligations, very many feel gratitude for those that are moderate; but there is scarcely any one who is not ungrateful for those that are weighty."—*Rochefoucauld.*

*a* "By folly is meant want of wisdom, *i.e.* ignorance of God and pravity of life which issues in ruin."—*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 15. *W. Scongal*, 157.

*v.* 17. *Dr. R. Sibbs*, ii. 215.

The best thoughts are ever swiftest winged, the duller lag behind.

*a* Is. xlii. 10; Jno. i. 3.

*b* "The description of the sea in this Ps., its ter-

rors and occupations, could not have been written before the reign of Solomon."—*Dean Stanley.*

"Mariners are said in Hebrew to 'go down' to the sea, bec. of the fact that the surface of the sea is below the level of the land."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 22. *Dr. J. Drysdale*, ii. 421.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

*d E. Corbett* (1642).

*a* "The waves rise up in mountains, then sink into deep valleys; the pilot skills not what to seek or shun, and his art is folly."—*Ovid.*

"The figure may have been taken from the syrtis, or a whirlpool."—*Perowne.*

*vv.* 23—28. *J. Flavel*, v. 359; *W. Scoresby*, 277; *J. Maltham*, 83.

"Likeness to nature is the perfection of art, and likeness to the God of nature is the perfection of grace."—*Waller.*

*v.* 30. *Dr. R. Welton*, 363.

*a H. T. Miller.*

"Surely oak and threefold brass surrounded his heart who first trusted a frail vessel to the merciless ocean."—*Horace.*

"The garrulous sea is talking to the shore; let us go down and hear the greybeard's

*Soul navigation* (*vv.* 23, 24).—I. Its weather is fouler to some than to others. II. An exposure to terrible disasters. III. There need be no shipwrecks. 1. He has an infallible chart; 2. He might have a safe anchorage; 3. He might have an all-sufficient Captain.[c]

*The nearness of God in trouble.*—God is never more near His people than when deliverance seems farthest off. They can be in no condition where He is at a stand, and cannot help them. The depths of mercy are beyond the depths of misery; and God hath His own ways of helping His own children, when all things else deny them help. Say that our sins are many and our transgressions great, yet God's mercies are more, and His glory will be greater in pardoning. He who will raise our bodies can mend our worst condition. Deliver us all He will, if we pray unto Him, for faithful prayer is omnipotent; and pray unto Him we shall, if we trust in Him, for trust is the root and life of successful prayer.[d]

25—27. (25) waves thereof, *i.e.* of the sea, or the deep, of *v.* 24. (26) they, *i.e.* the sailors. melted, there seems a reference to the physical suffering endured on a voyage. (27) stagger, with the movement of the vessel. wit's end, *lit.* "all their wisdom swallows itself up:" *i.e.* comes to nought.[a]

*God in the wind* (*v.* 25).—The celebrated St. Chad (a name known in early Church history) peculiarly recognised the finger of God in the "stormy wind" and tempest. It is recorded of him that if whilst reading he heard the sound of the wind, he would stop and utter a short prayer that God would be merciful to His people. If it increased, he would close the book, and, falling on his knees, remain fixed in prayer. But if it grew into a violent storm, then he would go to his church, and pass hours in earnest supplications and psalms. "Have you not read," he would say, "'The Lord thundered in the heavens, and the Highest gave forth His voice. Yea, He sent out His arrows and scattered them, and He shot out lightnings and discomfited them'? For the Lord moves the air, raises the wind, darts lightnings, and thunders from heaven, to excite the inhabitants of the earth to fear Him, to put them in mind of the future judgment, to dispel their pride, and vanquish their boldness, by bringing into their thoughts the dreadful time when, the heavens and the earth being in a flame, He will come in the clouds with great power and majesty, to judge the quick and the dead."

28—30. (28) then, *etc.*, *v.* 13. (29) a calm, or a gentle air. (30) haven, *Heb.* a place surrounded or enclosed, a creek, cove, or fiord.

*A sea sermon* (*v.* 30).—Refer to the context; sublime description of a storm at sea. I. The port "their desired haven." There is an earthly haven that some desire, a heavenly haven that all desire. II. The Pilot: "He bringeth them." Not driveth, or draweth, but bringeth. III. The providence: "So His way is perfect." It may not be so short, so easy, or so pleasant, as some would have it; but is "so."[a]

*The loss of the Kent.*—The *Kent*, East Indiaman, was burned in 1825. When the vessel was on fire, several of the soldiers' wives and children, who had fled for temporary shelter in the after-cabins on the upper deck, were engaged in prayer and in reading

the Scriptures with the ladies, some of whom were enabled, with wonderful self-possession, to offer to others those spiritual consolations which a firm and intelligent trust in the Redeemer of the world appeared at this awful hour to impart to their own breasts. The dignified deportment of two young ladies in particular formed a specimen of natural strength of mind, finely modified by Christian feeling, that failed not to attract the notice and admiration of every one who had an opportunity of witnessing it. On the melancholy announcement being made to them that all hope must be relinquished, and that death was rapidly and inevitably approaching, one of the ladies above referred to, calmly sinking down on her knees, and clasping her hands together, said, "Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" and immediately proposed to read a portion of the Scriptures to those around her. Her sister, with nearly equal composure and collectedness of mind, selected the forty-sixth and other appropriate Psalms; which were accordingly read, with intervals of prayer, by those ladies alternately, to the assembled females.[b]

31—34. (31) **oh that,** *v.* 8. (32) **assembly,** or sitting place. "Reference of the *v.* is to the temple and the judgment-seat, the two chief places of public resort." (33) **turneth rivers,** comp. Is. l. 2. (34) **barrenness,** marg. saltness.[a]

*All should praise God* (*v.* 31).—I. Consider the goodness of God. 1. It is eternal; 2. Universal; 3. The source of all goodness. II. Consider His wonderful works. 1. In the mechanism of our frames; 2. In the adaptations of nature; 3. In His providential government; 4. In the plan of redemption. III. How ought we to praise Him? 1. In every heart; 2. By every means; 3. In every place; 4. At all times.[b]

*Christian duty.*—All Christian duty consists in the exercise of confidence, faith, and love; for these combined constitute piety, justification, and holiness: since by confiding, man acquires piety; by believing, he acquires justification; and by loving, holiness. In order to confide, believe, and love, it is necessary to be wise, to understand, and to know; to be wise in selecting the object in which we ought to confide; to understand what it is we have to believe; and to know what we ought to love.[c]

35—38. (35) **standing water,** or a pool of water.[a] (36) **prepare,** *etc.*, see the injunction of Jeremiah to the captives (Jer. xxix. 5). (37) **fruits of increase,** results of growth, responding to man's care. (38) **cattle to decrease,** in these the riches of the people largely consisted.

*The beauty of nature.*—The fact is that there is hardly a roadside pond or pool which has not as much landscape in it as above it. It is not the brown, muddy, dull thing we suppose it to be; it has a heart like ourselves, and in the bottom of that there are the boughs of the tall trees, and the blades of the shaking grass, and all manner of hues of variable pleasant light out of the sky. Nay, the ugly gutter that stagnates over the drain-bars in the heart of the foul city is not altogether base; down in that, if you will look deep enough, you may see the dark, serious blue of the far-off sky, and the passing of June clouds. It is at your own will that you see in that despised stream either the refuse of the street or the image of the sky. So it is with almost all other things that we unkindly despise.[b]

speech." — *A. Smith.*

"The old thoughts never die. Immortal dreams outlive their dreamers and are ours for aye: no thought once form'd and utter'd can expire."—*Dr. Mackay.*

*b R. T. S.*

*a* Job xxxix. 6.

*v.* 31. *J. R. Pitman,* 417; *G. Carr,* ii. 344; *J. Grose,* vi. 193; *W. Gilpin,* ii. 238; *Dr. W. Craig,* ii. 1.

*v.* 34. *Bp. Hall,* v. 199.

*b W. W. Whythe.*

*c Juan de Valdes* (1540).

"A wise man reflects before he speaks; a fool speaks, and then reflects on what he has uttered."—*From the French.*

*a* Is. xli. 18, 19.

*vv.* 34, 38. *Bp. Gleig,* 301.

"Yes! place me 'mid far stretching woodless wilds! where no sweet song is heard; the heath bell there, would soothe my weary sight, and tell of Thee."—*Cowper.*

*b Ruskin.*

"The glorious light of all the sky was underneath this globe, and birds grew silent." — *Washington Irving.*

39, 40. (39) minished, weakened, lessened in number. (40) upon princes,[a] who have acted thus oppressively towards His people. (41) like a flock, Job xxi. 11. (42) righteous, *etc.*, Job v. 16, xxii. 19. (43) who is wise, or if there be any truly wise.[b]

*God's love seen in all His dispensations* (*v.* 43).—I. What are those things which are here presented to our notice? 1. The timely succour which He affords to the distressed; 2. His condescending attention to their prayers. II. The benefit arising from an attentive consideration of them. His loving-kindness will be seen—1. In the darkest dispensations of His providence; 2. In the most painful operations of His grace. Advice:—(1) View the hand of God in everything: (2) Take occasion from everything to spread your want before Him in prayer; (3) Give Him the glory of all the deliverances you receive.[c]

*God's care of the poor* (*v.* 41).—A minister one day visited a member of his flock who was in the poorhouse. She had passed her threescore years and ten, and had long been known as an "Israelite indeed;" and was just on the verge of the eternal world. "The outward man was perishing, but the inward man was renewed day by day." While in conversation with her on the comforts, prospects, and rewards of religion, the minister saw an unusual lustre beaming from her countenance, and the calmness of Christian triumph glistening in her eyes. Addressing her by name, he said, "Will you tell me what thought it was that passed through your mind, which was the cause of your appearing so joyful?" The reply of the old disciple was, "Oh, sir, I was just thinking what a change it will be from the poorhouse to heaven!"[d]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTH.*

**original author,—David**

*Contents, Fragments fr. Ps. lvii., lx.*

1–4. (1) heart is fixed, Ps. lvii. 7, 8. (2) early, as the sign of *earnestly*.[a] (3) nations, peoples living round about God's people. (4) above the heavens, Ps. lvii. 10. clouds, or skies.[b]

*God's mercy above the heavens* (*v.* 4).—1. The ideas involved in this representation. 1. Its lofty conspicuousness; 2. Its wide embrace; 3. The almighty sovereignty; 4. Its settled stability. II. How to be contemplated. 1. With ardent admiration, delight, and confidence: 2. With cheerful submission: 3. With watchful care to please God; 4. With hope as to the future.[c]—*The immensity of mercy* (*v.* 4).—I. The moral character and number of its objects. II. The grand purpose of its operations. III. The extraordinary means it employs. IV. The countless multitudes it has saved. V. The exhaustless provisions which remain.[d]

*The great mercy of God.*—God will fill the hungry soul, because He Himself hath excited and stirred up this hunger; He plants holy desires in us, and will not He satisfy those desires which He Himself hath wrought in us? As in the case of prayer, when God prepares the heart to pray, He prepares His ear to hear. God will satisfy the hungry, because the hungry soul is most thankful for mercy. The Lord loves to bestow His mercy where He may have most praise; we delight to give to them

*a* Job xii. 21.

*b* Comp. Hos. xiv. 10.

*v.* 43. *Dr. J. Collinges*, 173; *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 313; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, iii. 52; *J. Penn*, ii. 25; *J. Mason*, i. 260; *Bp. Shipley*, i. 127; *Dr. R. Parkinson*, ii. 260.

*c C. Simeon.*

"What is even poverty itself that a man should murmur under it? It is but as the pain of piercing a maiden's ear, and you hang precious jewels in the wound."—*Richter.*

*d Whitecross.*

*a* Better, "I will make the dawn." *b* Je. li. 9. See *J. Boys*, 919.

*v.* 4. *Dr. W. Wishart*, 409.

*c T. G. Horton.*

*d Dr. Thomas.*

"The law of the pleasure of having done anything for another is, that the one almost immediately forgets having given, and the other remembers eternally having received."—*Seneca.*

that are thankful. Musicians love to play where there is the best sound. God loves to bestow His mercies where He may hear of them again. God keeps open house for hungry sinners; He invites His guests, and bids them come "without money." Wait awhile, and thou shalt be filled. Spiritual mercies are not only worth desiring, but waiting for.

*e T. Watson* (1660).

**5, 6.** (5) **be thou exalted,** or, Oh show Thyself exalted. (6) **thy beloved,** plural, referring in the original passage (Ps. lx. 5) to the followers of David.

*Saving with the right hand;* i.e. with promptitude and power (*v.* 6).—"Why do you ask me to relate the wreck of the *Dutton?* Susan (Lady Exmouth) and I were driving to a dinner party at Plymouth, when we saw crowds running to the Hoe; and learning it was a wreck, I left the carriage to take her on, and joined the crowd. I saw the loss of the whole five or six hundred was inevitable, without somebody to direct them; for the last officer was pulled ashore as I reached the surf. I urged the officers to return, but they refused; upon which I made the rope fast to myself, and was hauled through the surf on board, established order, and did not leave her until every one was saved but the boatswain, who would not go before me. I got safe, and so did he; and the ship went all to pieces. But I was laid in bed for a week by getting under the mainmast, which had fallen towards the shore; and my back was cured by Lord Spencer's having conveyed to me by letter his majesty's intention to dub me a baronet. No more have I to say, except that I felt more pleasure in giving to a mother's arms, a dear little infant, only three weeks old, than I ever felt in my life; and both were saved. The struggle she had to entrust me with the bantling was a scene I cannot describe! nor need you; and, consequently, you will never let this be visible."[a]

"He that has nature in him must be grateful; it is the Creator's primary law, that links the chain of beings to each other."—*Madden.*

*a Letter of Ld. Exmouth.*

"Whatsoever I do, I would think what will become of it when it is done. If good, I will go on to finish it. If bad I will either leave off where I am, or not undertake it at all."—*Feltham.*

**7—13.** (7) **spoken,** respecting the establishment of David's dynasty.[a] (8—13) **Gilead,** *etc.*, *see* notes on Ps. lx. 7—12.

*God help us* (*v.* 12).—Consider these words—1. As the cry of the poor; 2. Of the oppressed; 3. Of the tempted; 4. Of the afflicted; 5. Of the dying.[b]—*Help from trouble.*—I. The evil deplored. Trouble may be—1. Personal; 2. Domestic; 3. Public. II. The blessing asked. 1. Relief; 2. From God; 3. In prayer. III. The reason assigned. 1. Men cannot remove our trouble; 2. Or limit our trouble; 3. Or sustain us under trouble; 4. Or overrule our trouble for our good.[c]

*Throwing the shoe* (*v.* 9).—Some Jewish versions read, "I will cast my glove," *i.e.* I have bound myself by a vow to enter into conflict with them. The practice in feudal times of casting a glove before an adversary, to provoke him to combat, has apparently had its origin in Eastern countries.

*a* 2 Sa. vii. *v.* 10. *J. R. Pitman,* 422. *v.* 12. *Bp. Beveridge,* vii. 256.

*b W. W. Whythe.*

*c G. Brooks.*

"Thoughts are but dreams, till their effects be tried."—*Shakespeare.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND NINTH.*

author,—poss. David

**1—5.** (1) **hold,** *etc.*, or "be not silent." Ps. xxviii. 1, xxxv. 22. "God speaks when He interferes to judge and to save."[a] **God . . praise,** De. x. 21; Je. xvii. 14. "O God, whom I praise continually for mercies continually new." (2) **mouth,** *etc.*, **wicked men had spoken lies and slander against him.** (3) **with-**

*A Psalm of imprecation.*

*a Delitzsch.*

See *J. Huss, Monimenta,* ii. 229;

out a cause, any ground, or occasion, given them by me (John xv. 25). (4) my love, *i.e.* in return for my love to them. prayer, *lit.* "but I am prayer:" one who has no defence but prayer, wh. is the best defence. (5) rewarded me, comp. Ps. xxxv. 12, xxxviii. 20.

*The refuge of the slandered* (*v.* 4).—Note the connection, especially the preceding verses. I. The treatment of which David was the subject—1. Very painful: 2. Very common: 3. To be expected by those who will live in Christ Jesus. II. The course David pursued when so treated—1. Different from the usual course—retaliation; self-justification; 2. Laid it before God in prayer: 3. Did so with earnestness; 4. The effect would be that he would be attached more and more to goodness, and be inwardly sustained, while God undertook his cause for him.

*Devoted to prayer* (*v.* 4).—Those that pray best, love God best: mistake me not; I do not say those that can pray with the most florid expressions, or those that can pray with the most general applause; but they that most feel every word they speak, and every thought they think in prayer: they whose apprehensions of God are most overwhelming; whose affections to God are most spiritually passionate; whose prayers are most wrestling, and graciously impudent, this is the man that prays best, and loves God best. I grant these are the prayers of a great proficient in the love of God: but you may pray for this frame when you cannot pray with it. The soul never falls sick of Divine love in prayer, but Christ presently gives it an extraordinary visit. Rouse up yourselves therefore, "give yourselves unto prayer.[b]"

6–9. (6) set, as a judge, or ruler. Let him experience the bitterness of the lot wh. he tries to make for me. Satan, this word should have been translated *adversary*. right hand, to plead against him. (7) condemned, go out guilty. prayer . . sin, or a failure, *i.e.* let not his pleas for mitigation of punishment be attended to. Some think, however, that prayer to God is meant.[a] (8) take his office, Ac. i. 20. (9) children, by Mosaic law the family shared in the curse of the wicked man.

*The prayer of the wicked* (*v.* 7).—The word "let" may be regarded as prophetic of what would be rather than as desiring what should be. I. Even the wicked sometimes pray. 1. As when they utter profane oaths—the swearer's prayer; 2. As when they are suddenly overtaken by trouble. II. The prayers of the wicked are sinful—1. Because they are without the true spirit of prayer—repentance, faith: 2. When they are directed to false Gods; 3. When they proceed from self-righteousness—the Pharisee's prayer.

10–13. (10) vagabonds, as Cain, Ge. iv. 12. desolate places, or ruined homes. (11) extortioner, or usurer. strangers, barbarians and foreigners. (12) extend mercy, when his punishments and sorrows are upon him. (13) posterity be cut off, comp. Is. liii. 8. generation following, *i.e.* his grandchildren. Let them be the last of his race.

*The temporal punishment of sin* (*vv.* 10–13).—I. Some of the natural consequences of sin are here enumerated. 1. Shortness of life; 2. Loss of social position; 3. Domestic poverty and degradation; 4. He is a prey to the oppressor; 5. Loss of human sympathy; 6. Social oblivion—the name of the wicked shall rot.

*Dr. T. Randolph*, ii. 315.

*c.* 4. *T. E. Hawkinson*, 129.

"Slander is a poison which extinguishes charity, both in the slanderer and in the person who listens to it; so that a single calumny may prove fatal to an infinite number of souls, since it kills not only those who circulate it, but also those who do not reject it."—*St. Bernard.*

*b Dr. Annesley* (1670)

"Constant thought will overflow in words unconsciously."—*Byron.*

*a* "His prayer not addressed to the human judge for mitigation of the sentence, but here, as always, prayer to God."—*Perowne.*

*vv.* 6–8. *J. P. Allen, Diary*, 421.

*v.* 8. *J. R. Pitman*, 428.

"If He prayed who was without sin, how much more it becometh a sinner to pray."—*St. Cyprian.*

*vv.* 12, 13. *G. Puttrick*, 315.

"One precedent creates another. They soon accumulate, and constitute law. What yesterday was fact to-day is doctrine. Examples are supposed to justify the most dangerous measures;

II. Show how these things result from sin. 1. God so orders it to manifest sin's nature; 2. Sinful habits, propensities, etc., naturally lead to them.

*Extortioner* (*v.* 11).—From *extorqueo*, "wring out." The idea of usury is not the principal one in the Old Testament passages, but rather that of unfairness and oppression in general. as in Is. xvi. 4, and in Ps. cix. 11, the extortioner "catching," is parallel with the stranger "spoiling." In the New Testament our translators have rendered the Greek word *harpax* constantly by it, and what they meant by this is seen in one passage, where the false prophets are called "ravening (*harpages*) wolves." In 1 Cor. v. 10, 11, we have an instance of the unsettled spelling of Tyndale's time, the word being spelt in two consecutive verses, extorsioner and extorcionar in Tyndale's New Testament.

14—17. (14) of his fathers, these, if not forgiven, may be visited on him.[a] (15) them, the sins mentioned in *v.* 14. (16) broken in heart, the feeble-hearted one, whom he should have pitied and helped.[b] (17) cursing, he loved doing it to others, not receiving it on himself.

*God does not despise the poor* (*v.* 16).—Moses was the son of a poor Levite; Gideon was a thresher: David was a shepherd-boy; Amos was a herdsman: the Apostles were "ignorant and unlearned:" Zwingle emerged from a shepherd's hut amongst the Alps: Melancthon was a workman in an armourer's shop; Martin Luther was the child of a poor miner; Carey, who originated the plan of translating the Bible into the language of the millions of Hindostan, was a shoemaker in Northampton; Dr. Morrison, who translated the Bible into the Chinese language, was a last-maker in Newcastle; Dr. Milner was a herd-boy in Aberdeenshire; Dr. Adam Clarke was the child of Irish cotters; John Foster was a weaver; Andrew Fuller was a farm-servant; William Jay of Bath was a herdsman.[c]

18—20. (18) into . . water, as the water into his inward parts.[a] (19) garment, or mantle. (20) reward, wages, or Divine recognition and visitation.

*Ingrained profanity.*—Theodorus Gaddaræus, who was tutor to Tiberius the Roman Emperor, observing in him, while a boy, a very sanguinary nature and disposition, which lay lurking under a show of lenity. was wont to call him, "a lump of clay steeped and soaked in blood." His predictions of him did not fail in the event. Tiberius thought death was too light a punishment for any one that displeased him. Hearing that one Carnulius, who had displeased him, had cut his own throat, "Carnulius," said he, "has escaped me." To another, who begged of him that he might die quickly, "No," said he, "you are not so much in favour as that yet."[b]

21—25. (21) do thou with me, or "take part with me." O God my Lord, O Jehovah Adonai.[a] "The twofold name of God, and the pronoun 'Thou,' Heb., show the intensity of the appeal." (22) is wounded, or "he pierced." (23) gone, or "I pass away." tossed . . locust,[b] which is driven about by high wind. (24) fasting, the sign of sorrow and humiliation. faileth of fatness, is wasted so as to contain no more fatness. (25) shaked their heads, comp. Ps. xxii. 7, xliv. 14; Matt. xxvii. 39.

and where they do not suit exactly, the defect is supplied by analogy."—*Junius.*

"Nurture your mind with great thoughts To believe in the heroic makes heroes."—*D'Israeli.*

*a* Ex. xx. 5.

Comp. sentence in the Litany, "Remember not our offences, nor the offences of our forefathers."

*b* "This *v.* had its most signal fulfilment when the people arose and constrained Pilate to crucify the Man of sorrows."—*Stier.*

*v.* 16. *C. Peters*, 348.

*c* *Bowes.*

*a* "He has clothed himself in cursing, he has drunk it in like water (Job xv. 16, xxxiv. 7), it has penetrated even to the marrow of his bones, like the oily preparations which are rubbed in and penetrate to the bones."—*Delitzsch.*

*v.* 19. *J. Hordern*, 45.

*b* *Cheever.*

*a* Ps. lxviii. 20, cxl. 7, cxli. 8.

*b* Job xxxix. 20.

*v.* 21. *B. Beddome*, ii. 58.

"It is impossible to diminish poverty by the multiplication of goods; for,

manage as we may, misery and suffering will always cleave to the border of superfluity."—*Jacobi.*

"When we have only a little we should be satisfied; for this reason, that those best enjoy abundance who are contented with the least; and so that the gains of poverty are removed, simple fare can give a relish equal to the most expensive luxuries."—*Epicurus.*

*e R. T. S.*

"Troubles are usually the brooms and shovels that smoothe the road to a good man's fortune, of which he little dreams; and many a man curses the rain that falls upon his head, and knows not that it brings abundance to drive away hunger."—*Basil.*

"Tribulation will not hurt you unless it does what, alas! it too often does—unless it hardens you, and makes you sour and narrow and sceptical."—*Chapin.*

"Thinking is creating with God, as thinking is writing with the ready writer; and worlds are only leaves turned over in the process of composition about His throne."—*Beecher.*

*David's plea and prayer* (*vv.* 21, 22).—I. His plea. 1. For I am poor and needy. In another place he says, "I am poor and needy, and yet the Lord thinketh upon me." The same ideas used differently, according to various moods; 2. Heart-wounds received from slanderous words of his enemies; 3. His great plea is the faithfulness and mercy of God. II. His prayer: Deliver me. The deliverance might come in many forms; as the healing of the wounds, and doing for him as he needed.

*The blessing of the poor* (*v.* 22).—A Christian minister, Lady Huntingdon states in one of her letters, had often expressed a desire to understand the meaning of our Lord's words in the sermon on the mount, "Blessed are the meek; for they shall inherit the earth." For a long time, however, he remained unsatisfied. But one morning, having taken a walk some considerable distance from his parish, he was surprised, on approaching a very poor cottage, to hear the voice of praise. He drew nearer, and looked in at the window; and saw a woman in the most wretched state of poverty that he had ever beheld. She had, on a little stool before her, a piece of black bread, and a cup of cold water; and with her hands and eyes lifted up to heaven, as in a rapture of praise, uttered these words: "What! all this, and Jesus Christ too! what! all this, and Jesus Christ too!' It need not be added, that he returned from such a scene of Christian triumph with a vivid perception of the meaning of his Master's language. Who would not have an interest in Christ, when it can render the abode of penury so cheerful and blessed?

26—28. (26) **help me**, the tone here changes from lamentation to confident hope of deliverance. (27) **done it**, brought the Psalmist into the distressing circumstances of wh. his enemies took such unfair advantage. (28) **thy servant**, Ps. lxix. 17.

*God the sure helper* (*v.* 26).—Dr. A. Patze, of Philadelphia, a surgeon in the Fourth Pennsylvania regiment, relates this incident: A captain came into the doctor's tent, and picked up a Bible, regarding it with much interest. In reply to some questions on the part of Dr. Patze, he related the following with regard to his grandfather, who was among the Hessians sent thither by England in the Revolutionary war: "My grandfather was one hundred and five years old when he died. Having served in the Hessian army during the Revolutionary war in this country, he was captured at Trenton, New Jersey, and sent to a farmer to work, where he experienced the kindest treatment he could possibly have expected. The war over, he returned to his native country, Hessia, and since 1830 drew a pension until he died. He was, even at the commencement of his pension, an old, helpless man, and I liked to have me always with him as a guide. His residence being at a considerable distance from the office where the pension was issued, the journey thither gave him sufficient time to talk to me of his military experience, and of the peculiarities of America, that far transatlantic country. Inspiring his little grandchild with courage and ambition to become a hero, he never forgot to add, 'But, my dear boy, if ever you should take up the life of a soldier, do not forget to make the ninety-first Psalm your motto: commit it memory; never let it be forgotten; and as often as you go into battle, always re-

member that Psalm, and appropriate it as your own earnest prayer. I assure you, no harm shall ever befall you.' And so I did," said the captain, "and have thus far found it proof against the hailstorm of bullets, grapeshot, and canister, and bursting shells. 'I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress: my God; in Him will I trust.'"

29—31. (29) let mine, *etc.*, better, "mine adversaries shall be:" the language of confident expectation that his prayer is heard and answered. (30) among the multitude, Ps. xxii. 25. (31) condemn, *lit.* "from the judges of his soul."[a]

*Adrian and the bishop* (v. 31).—Terantius, captain to the Emperor Adrian, presented a petition that the Christians might have a temple by themselves, in which to worship God apart from the Arians. The emperor tore his petition, and threw it away, bidding him ask something for himself, and it should be granted. Terantius modestly gathered up the fragments of his petition, and said, with true nobility of mind, "If I cannot be heard in God's cause, I will never ask anything for myself."[b]—*Admiral de Coligny.*—From the moment he espoused the Protestant cause Coligny's character acquired a new grandeur. The arrangements of his household were a model of order. He rose early, and having dressed himself, he summoned his household to prayers, himself leading their devotions. Business filled up the day, and not a few of its hours were devoted to the affairs of the Church; for deputies were continually arriving at the Castle of Chatillon from distant congregations, craving the advice or aid of the admiral. Every other day a sermon was preached before dinner when it chanced, as often happened, that a minister was living under his roof. At table a psalm was sung, and a prayer offered. After an early supper came family devotions, and then the household were dismissed to rest. It mattered not where Coligny was, or how occupied,—in the Castle of Chatillon, surrounded by his children and servants, or in the camp amid the throng of captains and soldiers,—this was ever the God-fearing manner of his life. Not a few of the nobles of France felt the power of his example, and in many a castle the chant of psalms began to be heard, where aforetime there had reigned only worldly merriment and boisterous revelry. To the graces of Christianity there were added, in the character of Coligny, the gifts of human genius. He excelled in military tactics, and much of his life was passed on the battle-field; but he was no less fitted to shine in senates, and to guide in matters of State. His foresight, sagacity, and patriotism would, had he lived in happier times, have been the source of manifold blessings to his native country. As it was, these great qualities were mainly shown in arranging campaigns and fighting battles. Protestantism in France, so at least Coligny judged, had nothing for it but to stand to its defence. A tyranny, exercised in the king's name, but none the less an audacious usurpation, was trampling on law, outraging all rights, and daily destroying by horrible deaths the noblest men in France, and the Protestants felt that they owed it to their faith, to their country, to the generations to come, and to the public liberties and Reformation of Christendom, to repel force by force, seeing all other means of redress were denied them. This alone made Coligny unsheathe the sword. The grand object of his life was freedom of worship for the Reformed in France. Could he have secured

"Ill deeds are doubled with an evil word."—*Shakespeare.*

a "The contrast bet. the closing thought and v. 6 is remarkable. At the right hand of the tormentor stauds Satan as an accuser, at the right hand of the tormented one stauds God as his vindicator; he who delivered him over to human judges is condemned, and he who was delivered up is 'taken away out of distress and fr. judgment' by the Judge of the judges."—*Delitzsch.*

b *Cheever.*

"Augustine has said, one of the goodliest spectacles, able to attract angels to the gates of heaven to behold it, is neither theatres, amphitheatres, pyramids, nor obelisks; but a man who knoweth how to do well and bear ill, and to vindicate himself from ill by doing well."—*N. Crussia.*

"It was wont to be said of Archbishop Cranmer, if you would be sure to have Cranmer do you a good turn, you must do him some ill one; for, though he loved to do good to all, yet especially he would watch for opportunity to do good to such as had wronged him."—*Spencer.*

that object, most gladly would he have bidden adieu for ever to camps and battle-fields, and, casting honours and titles behind him, been content to live unknown in the privacy of Chatillon. This, however, was denied him. He was opposed by men who "hated peace," and so he had to fight on, almost without intermission, till the hour came when he was called to seal with his blood the cause he had so often defended with his sword.[e]

[e] *Dr. Wylie.*

author,—David

*A Psalm of Messiah, as Priest-King.*

Principal N. T. references are Matt. xxii. 44; Mk. xii. 36; Lu. xx. 42; Ac. ii. 34; He. i. 3, 13.

[a] "A formula used in prophetic or other solemn or express declarations." —*Fausset.*

[b] "Equivalent to saying, 'Be thou associated with Me in My kingly dignity, in My power and universal dominion.'"—*Perowne.*

[c] "An expression derived from the custom of placing the foot upon the necks of the vanquished." — *Spk. Com.*

[d] "He gives us no other mark as to the spot in which Christ is to reign but this—in the midst of Thine enemies." — *Luther.*

[e] *R. Cecil, M.A.*

[f] *Whitecross.* "He is the Good Shepherd that laid down His life for the sheep (John x. 11); the Great Shepherd that was brought again from the dead (Heb. xiii. 20); the Chief Shepherd who shall appear again (1 Pet. v. 4); the Shepherd and Bishop of souls (1 Pet. ii. 25); He is the

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TENTH.*

1—3. (1) the Lord, *i.e.* Jehovah. said,[a] *lit.* an oracle, or utterance of Jehovah. my Lord, *i.e.* David's Lord, or Messiah. my right hand, or on My throne.[b] Regarded by Oriental nations as the position of the highest honour. footstool, the emblem of complete submission.[c] (2) rod . . strength, or strong sceptre: emblem of a king's power. rule thou, or assume dominion.[d] (3) beauties of holiness, or clad in holy, festive garments. from . . youth, it is difficult to decide whether this is a poetical description of Messiah Himself, or of His followers, numerous as the dew.

*The King of Zion* (*v.* 1).—I. Consider the inauguration of Christ as the King of Zion. II. His enemies. III. The general conquest here spoken of.—*David's Son and Lord* (*vv.* 1—3).—I. The result indicated. 1. The reference of this passage to the Messiah is obvious; 2. The state of dignity announced is highly exalted; 3. The subjection predicted is complete; 4. The assurance given is infallibly true. II. The means employed. Wherein does the power of the Gospel consist? 1. In the demonstration of its truth; 2. The authority of its utterances; 3. The disclosures it makes; 4. The love it reveals. III. The co-operation secured. 1. Hearts disposed for the work; 2. Character becoming the work; 3. Ardour and energy for accomplishing the work. Apply:—(1) Have we submitted to the authority of Christ? (2) Have we felt the power of His Word? (3) Have we the marks which distinguish His followers?[e]

*Nothing impossible to Jesus* (*v.* 3).—It has been said of Edward the Black Prince that he never fought a battle which he did not win; and of the great Duke of Marlborough that he never besieged a city which he did not take. Shall that be said of men, which we deny concerning the Most High God? Is He less successful than some human generals? Shall these invincibly prevail, and grace be liable to defeat? Impossible! The former of these, having conquered and taken prisoner King John of France, nobly condescended to wait on his royal captive the same night at supper. Christ, having first subdued His people by His grace, waits on them afterwards to the end of their lives.[f]

*The power of Christ.*—

To conquer and to save, the Son of God
Came to His own in great humility,
Who wont to ride on cherub wings abroad,
And round Him wrap the mantle of the sky.
The mountains bent their necks to form His road;
The clouds dropt down their fatness from on high;
Beneath His feet the wild waves softly flowed,
And the wind kissed His garment tremblingly.

The grave unbolted half his grisly door
(For darkness and the deep had heard His fame,
Nor longer might their ancient rule endure) :
The mightiest of mankind stood hushed and tame;
And trooping on strong wings. His angels came
To work His will, and kingdom to secure ;
No strength He needed, save His Father's name ;
Babes were His heralds and His friends the poor.[g]

**4—7.** (4) **sworn**, comp. Heb. vi. 13, 17, 18. **not repent**, the oath and decree are absolutely immutable. **a priest**, "this is the first intimation of the union of the kingly and priestly functions in the person of Messiah." **order of**, or manner of. **Melchizedek**, Ge. xiv. 18—24. (5) **the Lord**, *i.e.* Jehovah. **strike through**, or dashes in pieces.[a] (6) **judge**, in sense of bringing overwhelming punishments on them. **dead bodies**, a figure taken fr. the scenes of a great battle.[b] But Messiah's triumphs are spiritual. **heads**, *i.e.* the rulers or princes. (7) **drink . . way**, "of the brook shall he drink in the way."

*Melchizedek type of Christ* (*v.* 4).—I. In His name and title. 1. His name—King of Righteousness ; 2. His title—King of Peace. II. In the mystery of His origin. 1. Without genealogy —Divine Sonship ; 2. Without parentage—Incarnation. III. In His offices. 1. The union of the royal and priestly offices ; 2. The perpetuity of His priesthood. IV. In His benediction. 1. The person ; 2. The manner ; 3. The substance.[c]

*Humiliation and glory of Christ.*—A king which the world admires is one of extensive power, with numerous armies, a golden crown and sceptre, a throne of state, magnificent palaces, sumptuous feasts, many attendants of high rank, immense treasures to enrich them with, and various posts of honour to prefer them to. Here was the reverse of all this : for a crown of gold, a crown of thorns : for a sceptre, a reed put in His hand in derision ; for a throne, a cross ; instead of palaces, not a place to lay His head in ; instead of sumptuous feasts to others, ofttimes hungry and thirsty Himself ; instead of great attendants, a company of poor fishermen ; instead of treasures to give them, not money enough to pay tribute without working a miracle ; and the preferment offered them was to give each of them His cross to bear. In all things the reverse of worldly greatness, from first to last : a manger for a cradle at His birth ; not a place to lay His head sometimes in His life ; nor a grave of His own at His death. Here unbelief frets and murmurs, and asks, Where is all the glory that is so much extolled? For discovering this, faith needs only look through that thin veil of flesh : and under that low disguise appears the Lord of glory, the King of kings, the Lord of Hosts, strong and mighty (Ps. xxiv. 8). The Lord mighty in battle ; the heavens His throne ; the earth His footstool ; the light His garments ; the clouds His chariots ; the thunder His voice ; His strength omnipotence ; His riches all-sufficiency ; His glory infinite ; His retinue the hosts of heaven, and the excellent ones of the earth ; on whom He bestows riches unsearchable, an inheritance incorruptible, banquets of everlasting joys, and preferments of immortal honour, making them kings and priests unto God ; conquerors, yea, and more than conquerors ; children of God, and mystically one with Himself.[d]

Shepherd of the sheep, who gathers the lambs with His arm, and carries them in His bosom (John x. ; Is. xl. 11) ; the Shepherd of Israel (Ez. xxxiv. 23) ; Jehovah's Shepherd (Zec. xiii. 7)."—*John Bate.*

*g Bp. Heber.*

*a* Re. vi. 17, xi. 18.

*b* Is. lxvi. 16 ; Joel iii. 2 ; Re. xiv. 19, 20.

*v.* 4. *Dr. Featley*, 551 ; *Dr. W. Harris*, ii. 244 ; *Dr. Gill*, i. 155 ; *J. Reeve*, ii. 165 ; *T. Dwight*, ii. 307.

*v.* 7. *F. Elwin*, i. 233 ; *C. E. Kennaway*, i. 33 ; *R. W. Dibdin*, 841.

*c Mr. M'Ewen.*

"Christ hath made full satisfaction to God's justice, so now it is but dipping the pen in the blood of Christ and dashing out iniquity. Nay, Christ Himself hath blotted out even this handwriting that was against us, and nailed it to His cross. . . . God hath more satisfaction to His justice by every believer, than by the damned that lie in hell to all eternity, for they are never able to discharge the debt, but every believer by his Surety hath paid the uttermost farthing."—*Culverwell.*

*d J. Maclaurin.*

"The love of truth is the love of realities; the determination to rest upon facts, and not on semblances."—*F. W. Robertson.*

author and date,—unknown

*An alphabetical Psalm recounting God's mercies.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND ELEVENTH.*

1—5. (1) praise ye, Heb. *Hallelujah!* whole heart, involving ideas of sincerity and earnestness. assembly .. congregation, the first of these words implies a narrower and more intimate circle than the second.[a] (2) works, here those especially wh. concerned His people. sought out, made the objects of devout meditation and study.[b] (3) work, or working. righteousness, *i.e.* His beneficence to man.[c] (4) made .. remembered, His wonderful deeds are a perpetual memorial of Him.[d] (5) meat, the word is generally used of the "prey" of wild beasts. Chosen here in allusion to feeding in the wilderness.

*The works and righteousness of God* (vv. 2, 3).—In considering —I. The works of God, we have to dwell on His works of—1. Nature; 2. Providence; 3. Grace. II. The righteousness of God as illustrated by each department of His works. It is especially illustrated by—1. The history of Israel; 2. The Church; 3. The world of glory.[e]

*Wonders of creation* (v. 2).—"The incredible multitudes of the lowest grades of vegetable life, the rapidity of their growth, the shortness of their existence, and their enormous fruitfulness, make them powerful agents in preparing soil for the higher classes, which are nourished by their decay. But no sooner do even the monarchs of the forest fall than the work of destruction begins, the light and heat, which in their chemical form brought them to maturity, now in their physical character accelerate their decay; the moss and the lichen resume their empire, and live at the expense of the dying and the dead—cycle which perpetuates the green mantle of the earth. Notwithstanding the important part these inferior beings perform in the economy of nature, they were imperfectly known till they became a test for the powers of the microscope. Then, indeed, not only were the most wonderful organisms discovered in the ostensible tribes of the Cryptogamia, but a new and unseen creation was brought under mortal eye, so varied, astonishing and inexhaustible that no limit can be assigned to it. This invisible creation teems in the earth, in the air, and in the waters, innumerable as the sands on the sea-shore. These beings have a beauty of their own, and are adorned and finished with as much care as the creatures of a higher order. The deeper the research, the more does the inexpressible perfection of God's works appear, whether in the majesty of the heavens, or in the infinitesimal beings on the earth."[f]

6—10. (6) that .. give, better, "by giving." The Div. power was shown in securing the heritage for God's people.[a] (7) verity, absolute truthfulness.[b] sure, fixed, established, firm on the foundations of truth. (8) stand fast, by their own inherent worth; they need no upholding. (9) redemption, fr. Egyp. bondage. covenant, in Sinai. reverend, such as should fill us with awe and holy fear. (10) beginning, first and principal part:[c] so "chief part in." good understanding, marg. "good success:"[d] a "true prudence."

*Religion the highest wisdom, sin the greatest folly* (v. 10).—I. Instances of the folly and madness of such as do not make the fear of the Lord the beginning of their wisdom. 1. Men will

*a* Ps. xxv. 14 (word trans. *secret*), lxxxix. 7. "Secretly among the faithful, and in the congregation."—*Pr. Bk. Vers.*

*b* v Searched into (are they) for all their delights."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* Ps. xix. 9, cxii. 3. "His righteousness wh. He has made memorable by wonders of love and mercy, in supplying the wants of His people according to covenant engagements."—*Fausset.*

*d* Nu. xvi. 40; Jos. iv. 6, 7; Ps. lxxviii. 3, 4.

*e* *J. J. Cort, M.A.* v. 2. *J. Slade*, i. 393; *S. Bourn*, i. 107; *Dr. J. Leland*, iii. 45; *S. Summers*, 478; *J. J. Blunt. Huls. Lect.* 177; *J. Kelly, Lect. on Pro.* iv. 1. v. 4. *C. De la Rue*, iii. 61; *Bp. Pearson*, ii. 153. v. 5. *E. Cooper*, v. 213.

*f* *Mrs. Silverlom.*

*a* "A curious Rabbinical explan. of this v. is that God revealed the fact that He is the Creator of the world, in order that it might be evident He is supreme Lord and master of it, and thus, being at liberty to give any portion of it

not take the safest side in religion, which reason and self-love carry them to in other respects; 2. It is a folly to believe the great truths of religion, and yet act contrary to such a belief; 3. To pretend to love God, when their character shows the contrary; 4. To hope for heaven, when they have no good title: 5. To be more concerned about time than eternity. II. The inferences from this subject. 1. How wonderful that such folly is not lamented; 2. With what an ill grace do the irreligious despise those who make religion their chief concern; 3. Absurd for men not to turn their thoughts to religion lest it should make them melancholy; 4. Unreasonable for men to charge religion with making people mad; 5. How wonderful that God should grant what men despise; 6. We infer that human nature is exceedingly depraved.[c]

*The Great Redeemer* (*v.* 9).—"I have taken much pains," says the learned Selden, "to know everything that was esteemed worth knowing among men; but, with all my disquisitions and reading, nothing now remains with me to comfort me, at the close of life, but the passage of St. Paul: 'It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.' To this I cleave, and herein I find rest."—*Christ a substitute.*—It is not by incarnation, but by blood-shedding, that we are saved. The Christ of God is no mere expounder of wisdom; no mere deliverer or gracious benefactor; and they who think that they have told the whole Gospel when they have spoken of Jesus revealing the love of God, do greatly err. If Christ be not the substitute, He is nothing to the sinner. If He did not die as the sin-bearer, He has died in vain. Let us not be deceived on this point, nor misled by those who, when they announce Christ as the Deliverer, think they have preached the Gospel. If I throw a rope to a drowning man, and risk my life to save another, I am a deliverer. But is Christ no more than that? If I cast myself into the sea and risk my life to save another, I am a deliverer. But is Christ no more? Did He but risk His life? The very essence of Christ's deliverance is the substitution of Himself for us, His life for ours. He did not come to risk His life: He came to die; He did not redeem us by a little loss, a little sacrifice, a little labour, a little suffering: "He reedemed us to God by His blood;" "the precious blood of Christ." He gave all He had, even His life, for us. This is the kind of deliverance that awakens, "To Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."[f]

to whomsoever He will, cannot be charged with injustice for taking the inheritance of the nations, and giving it to Israel."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Ps. xix. 7; Ro. xv. 3.

*c* Job xxviii. 28; Pr. i. 7, ix. 10.

*d* Pr. xiii. 15; also De. iv. 6; Ec. xii. 13.

*v.* 10. *Bp. Beveridge*, v. 159; *N. Brady*, i. 167; *T. Hunter*, ii. 357; *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 217; *J. B. Hollingworth*, 414; *J. Charlesworth*, ii. 83; *S. Partridge*, i. 285; *A. Burnaby*, 94; *A. W. Hare*, i. 61; *Abp. Sharp*, i. 120.

*e Pres. Davis.*

*f Dr. Bonar.*

"Human excellence, parted from God, is like a fabled flower, which, according to Rabbis, Eve plucked when passing out of Paradise; severed from its native root, it is only the touching memorial of a lost Eden; sad, while charming—beautiful, but dead."—*C. Stanford.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWELFTH.*

author and date,—unknown

*Subj., the excellence of piety, and its reward.*

1—3. (1) blessed, *etc.*, Ps. i. 1. delighteth, "true fear produces obedience, and this happiness." (2) mighty, a word generally used of warlike strength, but sometimes in the more general sense of wealth, substance, etc.[a] generation, family, or descendants. (3) wealth, indicating the kind of might referred to in *v.* 2.[b] righteousness, with chief reference to beneficence, or a liberal regard for the wants of others, *v.* 9.[c] for ever, or permanently; unaffected by changes of prosperity or adversity.

*a* Ru. ii. 1; 1 Sa. ix. 1; 2 Ki. xv. 20; Is. v. 22.

"His seed shall be a warrior in the earth." So, not satisfac-

torily, translates *Hengstenberg.*

*b* Pr. iii. 16, viii. 18.

*c* "What is meant may be that when the God-fearing man thus receives the reward of temporal riches, he is not led astray by them, but continues unswerving in his merciful regard for the wants of others. Or else that he had the long-lived reputation of a beneficent man."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*d* *Whitecross.*

*e* *Quiver.*

"Concave mirrors magnify the features nearest to them into undue and monstrous proportions; and in common mirrors that are ill cast, and of uneven surface, the most beautiful face is distorted into deformity. So there are many minds of this description: they distort and magnify, diminish or discolour, almost every Gospel truth which they reflect."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

*a* Ps. xcvii. 11.

*b* "Some take the three attributes as in apposition with the noun *light*, God Himself being the *Light*. They read, 'Here hath arisen a Light, viz. He who is gracious.' The ref. to the upright man is, however, to be preferred."—*Perowne.*

*c* Pr. x. 7; 2 Pe. i. 5–7, 10.

*Breaking the Sabbath* (*v.* 1).—On a recent occasion, a young man accustomed to attend Divine worship, and, from a child, well acquainted with the Holy Scriptures, was solicited to join in an excursion on the Thames on the Sabbath-day. Conscience remonstrated: but the love of pleasure, and the temptation of entertaining society, silenced the monitor. The day was agreed upon—the weather was unusually fine, and the party, about twelve in number, assembled on the bank to proceed to Richmond. Among the party was this young man. Just as he was stepping into the boat, the happy remembrance of the word of God spoke powerfully, "Remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy." Conscience instantly added, "How can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God!" He could proceed no farther; he retired from the brink of the Thames amid the jeers and ridicule of the scornful. But what were his feelings when the sad tidings came, that as the party returned from their unhallowed amusement, in the neighbourhood of Putney the boat ran foul of a barge laden with coal; the party, half intoxicated, saw, but could not clear the impending danger. The screams of the females were heard on the shore, but, alas! to no effect. Seven of the number sank to rise no more.[d]—*The fashion of going to church.*—How many treat religion as if it were one of the engagements of life, merely to be existed in. But religion is "the power of God." Your religion is not the true and real thing if it never had any power over you, if it never restrained your selfishness, never sweetened your temper, never humbled your pride, never opened your purse, never supplied pure motives for your actions: and above and beyond all, if it has left you to-day as you were ten years ago. If these things are true, and if you would really account for the profession you make, you may find the reason of your profession not in the love you bear to God, but in the fashion of society; and if you will calmly analyse and construe your motives, you will not say that I am wrong in asserting that should it become the fashion to-morrow (which the god of this world and its fashions will take good care that it does not) not to come to church, not to make any special profession, you would follow the fashion. You have heard and read this often; you partly assent to it. You ask, "What would you have of us?" We answer, "We would have you serve God because you love Him, and for no other reason; and if you do not and cannot love Him, it is better not to proffer the service."[e]

4—6. (4) **light in the darkness,** a fig. for "relief in calamity."[a] **gracious,** *etc.*, further descriptions of the upright man.[b] (5) **lendeth,** Ps. xli. 1; Pr. xiv. 21. **with discretion,** or judgment. Can sustain his cause in the judgment, *i.e.* in the court of judgment. (6) **everlasting remembrance,** as long as men can remember anything.[c]

*A noble people and a blessed experience* (*v.* 4).—I. The persons here spoken of, who are they? Those who, enlightened by the spirit of truth, and moved by a reverential fear of God, earnestly desire to know the right and constantly endeavour to do it. II. The experience here referred to. Light arising, etc.—1. In the darkness of religious doubt; 2. Of providential designs; 3. Of earthly trial; 4. Of spiritual distress.[d]—*The sowing for the righteous.*—I. Who is the upright man? He is one who—1. Looks upward; 2. Walks upward; 3. Points upward. What is

the blessedness promised him? Light in the darkness of—1. Ignorance: 2. Doubt; 3. Perplexity; 4. Affliction; 5. Death.[e]

*Falling leaves* (*v.* 6).—The leaves of some trees when they fall leave no trace whatever behind. The scar left by their removal heals immediately, and on the smooth naked bark of the bough, in winter, there is no mark to indicate that it was once covered with foliage. There are other trees, however, on which the scars are permanent. The leaf drops off, but it leaves a seal-like impression behind on the stem, and no succeeding growth can obliterate it. Through summer's luxuriance and winter's desolation, the memory of the vanished leaf remains indelibly fixed on the tree, engraved as if with a pen of iron upon the bough which it once adorned. The tree may increase in size until it forms a grove by itself; but the signet-mark left by the leaf, which fell from it when it was a mere sapling, still cleaves to it in the grandeur of old age. Many of the characteristic markings on the stems of palm trees and tree ferns are due to the permanence of these scars, when their leaves are decayed and dropped off. And is not the lesson of analogy here very clear and impressive? How many there are who fade and drop off the tree of humanity, and leave no trace of their existence behind! while others, when they fade and drop off the tree of life, leave behind them an impression which time will only make deeper—an empty space, whose perpetual vacancy reminds the survivors of an irreparable loss.[f]

**7–10.** (7) **evil tidings,** of calamities to himself, or his nation. An assured confidence in God lifts him above all fear.[a] **fixed,** Ps. lvii. 7. (8) **until he see,** with the look of triumph.[b] (9) **dispersed,**[c] not hoarded for himself. comp. note on *v.* 3. "An abundant scattering of good is intimated." **horn,** Ps. lxxv. 4, 5. (10) **gnash,** *etc.*, Ps. xxxv. 16. **melt away,** the fig. for despair.[d]

*The government of the heart* (*v.* 8).—I. Show the need of this government. II. Give some rules for it. 1. Let there be a proper reverence of self; 2. Prayer; 3. Recollect the connection between thought and action; 4. Trace pain and pleasure to their proper source; 5. Wisely employ time; 6. Cherish the love of candour; 7. Encourage a sense of the constant presence of God.[e]

*Confidence in God* (*v.* 7).—When Alexander the Great was suffering from a violent fever, he received a letter denouncing his physician Philip as a traitor who had been bribed to take him off by poison. At that very moment the physician stood by his bedside with a medicinal draught. The king gave the letter to Philip to read, and then unhesitatingly drank off the medicine. Thus should the believer confide in God, without wavering or doubting.

*Faith triumphant.*—

Triumphant faith!
Who, from the distant earth, looks up to heaven,
Seeing invisibility, suspending
Eternity upon the breath of God.
She can pluck mountains from their rooted thrones,
And hurl them into ocean; and from pain,
And prisons, and contempt, extort the palm
Of everlasting triumph. She doth tread

*v.* 4. *T. Raffles, Sers.*; *C. Foster*, 209; *R. W. Dibdin*, 161.
*v.* 5. *Abp. Tillotson*, v. 310; *Bp. T. Wilson*, iv. 455; *Dr. L. Howard*, 191; *J. Dun*, ii. 107; *Dr. W. Cooper*, i. 223; *J. Malham*, 153.

*d J. Morgan.*

*e W. W. Whythe.*
"He that lacks time to mourn, lacks time to mend; eternity mourns that."—*Sir H. Taylor.*

*f H. Macmillan.*

*a* "The epithets 'established,' 'trusting,' 'upheld,' are all strikingly descriptive of the true attitude of faith, as that wh. *leans on*, and is *supported by*, God."—*Perowne.*
*b* Comp. Is. xxvii. 3.
*c* 2 Cor. ix. 9.
*d* 2 Sa. xvii. 10.
*v.* 7. *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 234; *Dr. R. Lucas*, i. 169; *J. Carrington*, 116; *Bp. Gleig*, 343.
*v.* 9. *I. Barrow*, ii. 169; *Dr. A. Snape*, i. 41.
*vv.* 9, 10. *Dr. W. Berriman*, 476.
*e Sydney Smith.*
"Sin is essentially a departure from God."—*Luther.*
"It is not the quantity of thy faith that shall save thee. A drop of water is as true water as the whole ocean. So a little faith is as true faith as the greatest. A child eight days old is

as really a man as one of sixty years; a spark of fire is as true fire as a great flame; a sickly man is as true living as a well man. So it is not the measure of thy faith that saves thee—it is the blood that it grips to, that saves thee." —*Welsh.*

Upon the neck of pride like the free wind
On angry ocean. Lo! with step erect
She walks o'er whirlpool waves and martyr fires,
And depths of darkness and chaotic voids;
Dissolving worlds, rent heavens, and dying suns;
Yea, and o'er paradises of earth's bliss,
And oceans of earth's gold, and pyramids
And temples of earth's glory; all these pave
Her conquering path to heaven—all these she spurns
With feet fire-shod, because her hand is placed
Immoveably in God's; her eye doth rest
Unchangeably on His: nor will she stop
Till, having cross'd the stormy waves of pain
And fiery trial, she may lay her head
Upon her Father's breast and take the crown
From love's rejoicing hand.*f*

*f Miss Tatham.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTEENTH.*

author and date,—unknown

*Praise to Him who raiseth out of low estate.*

1—4. (1) servants, *etc.*,*a* all faithful Israelites. (2) name of the Lord, regarded as summing up His perfections and gracious works.*b* (3) from . . same, fig. for from east to west, or throughout the world. to be praised, better, "let it be praised." (4) above, *etc.*, Ps. cxlviii. 13.

*The goodness of God.*—The greatness of His goodness is that which makes it ours; nor doth He do us good because that we are good, but because He is liberally so: as the sun shines on dunghills, not out of any invitation his beams find there, but because it is his nature to be diffusive of his light: yet with this difference, that whereas the sun's bounty, by being rather an advantage to us than a favour, deserves our joy, and not our thanks, because his visits are made designlessly, and without any particular intention of address (by such a bare necessity of nature as that which makes springs flow out into streams, when their beds are too narrow to contain the renewed water that doth incessantly swell the exuberant sources), God, on the contrary, for being necessarily kind, is not less freely or obligingly so, to you or me; for, though some kind of communicativeness be essential to His goodness, yet His extension of it without Himself, and His vouchsafing it to this or that particular person, are purely arbitrary. To omit His love to the numberless elect angels, the strict relations betwixt the persons of the blessed Trinity supplying God with internal objects, which employed His kindness before the creation, and Himself being able to allow His goodness the extent of infinity for its diffusion.*c*

*a* "A designation of the sacred nation common in the latter part of Isaiah."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Ex. xxxiii. 19. See *J. Boys*, 845.

*c R. Boyle.*

5—9. (5) who, *etc.*, comp. Ex. xv. 11. (6) humbleth, or "looks down as low as." (7) raiseth, *etc.*, 1 Sa. ii. 8; Lu. i. 52, 53. (8) of his people, Jehovah's people, regarded as more honourable than the ordinary princes of nations. (9) barren, or houseless.*a* children, "*a house* in Heb. implies children; without wh. it is cheerless, and without wh. the wife has no secure place."*b*

*Stooping to lift* (*vv.* 5—8).—I. The manifestations of God's condescension. 1. In speaking to us, in Eden at sundry times; 2

*a* "The Rabbins actually speak of a man's wife as his house, and the same form of speech is current at the present day among the Arabs. The similarity of the Gothic word *heiva*, 'house,'

By symbols of His presence, Shekinah ; 3. In the assumption of our nature ; 4. In the vicarious death of Christ. II. The effect in man's exaltation. 1. Advancement to His service ; 2. Sharing His friendship ; 3. Adoption into His family.[c]

*The greatness of God* (*vv.* 5, 6).—Infidelity has made use of the revelations of the telescope, disclosing, as it does, worlds far larger than our own, to ridicule the idea of the Deity taking notice of the inhabitants of the world in which we dwell. In reply to this, Dr. Chalmers offers the following remarks :—"About the time of the invention of the telescope, another instrument was formed which laid open a scene no less wonderful, and rewarded the inquisitive spirit of man with a discovery which serves to neutralise the whole of the argument. This was the microscope. The one led me to see a system in every star ; the other leads me to see a world in every atom. The one taught me that this mighty globe, with the whole burden of its people, and of its countries, is but a grain of sand on the high field of immensity. The other teaches me that every grain of sand may harbour within it the tribes and the families of a busy population. The one told me of the insignificance of the world I tread on, the other redeems it from all its insignificance ; for it tells me that in the leaves of every forest, and in the flowers of every garden, and in the waters of every rivulet, there are worlds teeming with life, and numberless as are the glories of the firmament. . . . By the one there is the discovery that no magnitude, however vast, is beyond the grasp of the Divinity ; but by the other we have also discovered that no minuteness, however shrunk from the notice of the human eye, is beneath the condescension of His regard."[d]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FOURTEENTH.*

author,— unknown : date, prob. after the exile

"*Nature's commotion before the God of the Exodus.*"

1—4. (1) strange language, *lit.* a stammering (*i.e.* unintelligible) people ; other than the sacred Hebrew language.[a] (2) Judah . . Israel, this distinction shows how the mind had been affected by the separation under Rehoboam. It does not appear whether the tribes or the parts of the country are chiefly in the writer's mind. sanctuary, place of his habitation.[b] (3) sea, Ex. xiv. 21. Jordan, Jos. iii. 13. (4) mountains, *etc.*, poetical ref. to Div. manifestation on Sinai, *see* Ex. xix. 18.[c] lambs, *lit.* the sons of the flocks.

*Faith the source of the Church's strength* (*v.* 1).—I. What constitutes holiness and faithfulness in the Church, and assures her of spiritual progress and success? II. The duty of ministers to preach the verity of the faith, and unite with this holiness of life.[d]

*Surface belief.*—Unless a man values and uses his conception of Christ, or his creed, as a medium of the Spirit, as a lens to condense the radiance of the everlasting world upon his soul, a perfect surface belief is of no account. Some creeds have truth and little power ; others have power and not so much truth. The men of science tell us now that there is a very subtle chemical energy in the sun-ray—as it were, the soul of it—which is different from its light-giving and its heating properties. Certain glasses stained dark blue will admit scarcely any light, and yet will offer no interruption to the passage of this mysterious force. On the

and *hira* 'wife,' may perhaps be noticed in illustration of this usage."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b Spk. Com.*

"If God gives a wife children He thereby makes her thoroughly at home, and rooted-in her position."—*Delitzsch.*

Is. liv. 1 ; Ga. iv. 27.

*v.* 5. *J. Seed*, 359 ; *J. Adams*, 47.

*vv.* 5, 6. *Dr. J. Orton*, i. 9 ; *C. Bradley*, 52 ; *Dr. T. Chalmers*, vii. 68.

*c W. W. Whythe.*

*d Dr. Chalmers.*

*a* "The strange language is particularised as the sign of a barbarous, unholy people, contrasted with the holy, separated people."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Ex. xix. 6 ; 2 Cor. vi. 16—18.

*c* Comp. Ps. xxix. 6 ; Ha. iii. 6.

*d R. B. Slipper.* Bodies are thoughts precipitated into space. The basis of the British and Foreign Bible Society was a thought in the mind of Rev. Mr.

Charles, of Bala; that of the Anti-slavery Society of England a thought of Thomas Clarkson. A thought sent Moffat to Africa, Morrison to China, Williams to the South Sea Islands, and Judson to Burmah. These were thoughts that took life and organisation. *d T. S. King.*

*a* "The conclusion, that a look of the God of Jacob did these miracles, and turned the rock not into water, but a pool of water, and the flint into a springing fountain, makes up a picture of sublimity to wh. no parallel can be found."—*Herder.*

*b W. Hugh* (1546). "As a light and pliant harebell swinging in the breeze on some grey rock — its birth-place — so had I wanton'd, fast rooted in the ancient tower of my beloved country, wishing not a happier fortune than to wither there."—*Wordsworth.*

*c H. K. White.*

contrary, a yellow glass, which transmits almost undiminished the intensity of the light, will completely cut off this chemical principle, whatever it be. So we cannot fail to see how some head-creeds of darkest blue, that one would think must make the universe dismal and life a bitter bondage, will transmit the vital effluence of the Holy Spirit to many a believer's heart. While other people may diffuse and live in the full intellectual radiance of a true philosophy of the Gospel, and receive through it nothing of that thrilling energy which is twisted in with the pure light of eternity, and in which the Gospel attests its power. So that the important question is not so much what we think of the Holy Spirit, as what the Spirit thinks of us and of the truth we have worked into form. Does God use it for His regenerative purposes? Does He make it the medium of His most secret and quickening grace? [d]

5—8. (5) **ailed thee,** comp. Ps. lxviii. 16: Is. xxiii. 7. (6) **skipped,** *v.* 4. (7) **tremble,** as the mountains did at the Theophany. (8) **rock,** Ex. xvii. 6. **flint,** better, "the steep cliff."[a]

*A lesson from creation.*—Seeing that the works of God are so great and innumerable, wondrous and delectable, which the good and the evil both receive, how great shall those be which the good shall receive, being alone! Seeing that He performeth so much for His friends and His enemies, yet being together, what shall He do for His friends separately! Seeing that He comforteth us so much in the day of tears, how much shall He comfort us in the day of marriage! Seeing that the prison containeth such things, what manner of things shall our country contain![b]

*Inquiry for God.*—

What art Thou, mighty One? and where Thy seat?
Thou broodest on the calm that cheers the lands,
And Thou dost bear within Thy awful hands
The rolling thunders and the lightnings fleet;
Stern on Thy dark-wrought car of cloud and wind
Thou guid'st the northern storm at night's dread noon,
Or on the red wing of the fierce monsoon
Disturb'st the sleeping giant of the Ind.
In the drear silence of the polar span,
Dost Thou repose? or in the solitude
Of sultry tracks, where the lone caravan
Hears nightly howl the tiger's hungry brood?
Vain thought! the confines of His throne to trace,
Who glows through all the fields of boundless space.[c]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FIFTEENTH.*

**author,— unknown: date, time of the second temple**

*Subj., the vanity of idols, and idol-worship.*

*a* Is. xlviii. 11; Eze. xxxvi. 32.

1—3. (1) **not unto us,** the expression of deep humility, and distrust of self. **mercy,** or loving-kindness.[a] (2) **wherefore,** Ps. lxxix. 10. **where . . God?** Ps. xlii. 3, 10.[b] (3) **but,** or seeing that; "all the while our God is in the heavens."[c]

*God's mercy acknowledged* (*v.* 1).—I. The duty of gratitude to God for the mercies received from Him in the time of trouble. II. The duty which this mercy in trouble should teach us.[d]

*Give glory to God* (*v.* 1).—A famous king of England demanded

of his assembled nobles "by what title they held their lands?" At the rash question a hundred swords leaped from their scabbards. "By these," they replied, "we won, and by these we will keep them!" How different the scene which heaven presents! All eyes are fixed on Jesus. Every look is love; gratitude glows in every bosom, and swells in every song; now, with golden harps, they sound the Saviour's praise, and now, descending from their thrones to do Him homage, they cast their crowns in one glittering heap at the feet which were nailed on Calvary. Look there, and learn in whose name to seek salvation, and through whose merits to hope for it.[c]—*God omniscient.*—There is not a city, there is not a village, not a house, on which the eye of God is not fixed. He notices the actions, words, and thoughts of every member of every family, in this and in every place. He observes every family in which no prayer is offered, and marks that as a house on which His blessing cannot rest. If they acknowledge not God, neither can God acknowledge them as His: for "them that honour Me," saith God, "I will honour; and they that despise Me shall be lightly esteemed." He sees the knavery and dishonesty which are practised in some houses, and which the inhabitants of the houses think to shut in with the walls which enclose them. He sees those who profane His Sabbaths by buying and selling, and other occupations of a worldly nature; by unnecessary journeys and visits; by paying labourers and settling accounts, and arranging the business of the week; by curtailing the day themselves; or by compelling or tempting their servants and dependents to neglect the duties of the day for the sake of supplying their tables with luxuries, which might well be spared, or provided on other days. He notices the vain and unprofitable conversation of many who forget that for "every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment:" and the wicked thoughts and desires which are indulged in privacy, by some who would blush to think that their imaginations were exposed to any human eye. He knows all the hypocrisy which sometimes lurks under fair words and specious performances. He knows and observes all and forgets nothing. He records all in His book of remembrance. Let the consideration that all things are naked and opened unto the eye of Him with whom we have to do have its proper influence upon us.[f]

4—8. (4) **their idols,** Ps. cxxv. 15—18. **work . . hands,** this is the all-sufficient stamp of their worthlessness. A man-made god must be worthless.[a] (5—7) **speak . . throat,** lit. *mutter*, not even utter articulate sounds. (8) **like them,** are becoming, like them, powerless, senseless. "As is a god so is his worshipper." Ro. i. 21, 22.

*The weakness of man.*—The eminently pious Richard Baxter, after he had spent many years in the advancement of the glory of God, by laborious and constant preaching, unceasing pastoral labours, and numerous publications from the press, was yet unwilling to allow himself rest, even amidst the infirmities of disease and age. An old gentleman, who heard him preach, related that when he ascended the pulpit, with a man following him to prevent his falling backward, and to support him, if needful, in the pulpit, many persons would be ready to say he

*b* "The attributes of God would be assailed if the taunt of the heathen should be allowed to pass unsilenced. It is God's glory which is at stake."—*Perowne.*

*c* Is. xlvi. 10; Da. iv. 35; Eph. i. 11.

*d E. Trees.*

*e Dr. Guthrie.*

"Man is evidently made for thinking: this is the only excellence that he can boast. To think aright is the sum of human duty; and the true art of thinking is to begin with ourselves, our Author, and our end. And yet, what is it that engrosses the thoughts of the world? Not any of these objects; but pleasure, wealth, honour, and esteem; in fine, the making ourselves kings, without reflecting what it is to be a king, or to be a man."—*Pascal.*

*f Preston.*

*a* Ac. xvii. 29. "The author might know, fr. his own experience, how little was the distinction made by the heathen worship between the symbol and the thing symbolised. Accordingly, the worship of idols seems to him, as to the later prophets, to be the extreme of self-stupefaction, and of the destruc-

tion of human consciousness."—*Delitzsch.*

*v.* 8. *Bp. Pearce*, iv. 189.

*b R. T. S.*

*v.* 9. *D. W. Marks*, 262.

*vv.* 12, 13. *G. Williams*, 211.

Beauty is its own excuse for being.

*a R. Jones.*

was more fit for a coffin than for labour: but all this he would soon forget, and manifest in his labours the fervour and energy of youth. It was feared, the last time he preached, that he would have died in the pulpit. And yet, such was his humility, that when reminded of his labours on his death-bed, he replied, "I was but a pen in God's hand, and what praise is due to a pen?"[b]

9—13. (9) **thou . . their**, the change in the pronoun indicates that these sentences were repeated as responses in a liturgical service. **Israel**, the whole people. (10) **house of Aaron**, the priesthood. (11) **fear the Lord**, the pious ones of the nation. (12) **will bless**, the confidence is felt bec. of past blessings. (13) **small and great**, *i.e.* all, without exception.

*Thanksgiving for harvest* (*v.* 12).—I. The Lord has been mindful of us in our temporal wants. II. He has been mindful of us in our eternal welfare. III. Let us see how these two great blessings have operated upon us.[a]

14—18. (14) **increase you**, De. i. 11. Perhaps here the idea is, "add blessings to you and your children."[a] (15) **made . . earth**, Ps. cxxi. 2, cxxiv. 8, cxxxiv. 3. (16) **heaven**, *etc.*, better, "The heavens are a dwelling-place for the Lord." (17) **dead**, *etc.*, "Praise is the function only of the living, who receive these blessings."[b]

*The earth for man* (*v.* 16).—The earth is given to man for two purposes. I. As affording a strong rebuke to all social monopoly. II. As affording a strong rebuke to religious indifference. The earth should be a scene—1. For man's physical development; 2. A school for man's intellectual culture; 3. A temple for man's religious worship; 4. As a sphere for evangelistic labour.[c]

*Harvest.*—

'Neath summer's bright and glorious sky,
While proudly waves the golden grain,
And through the falling fields of rye,
Comes on the joyous reaper train—
While nature smiles, and hill and plain
Are tranquil as the sleeping sea,
And peace and plenty brightly reign
By homestead, hearth, and forest tree,
God of the seasons, unto Thee we raise
Our hands and hearts in melody and praise.

There is a sweet breath from the hills,
The incense from the mountain air,
Which from a thousand flowers distils
Its odours delicate and rare:
We feel its balm—we see it there
Among the bending wheat-blades move,
Kissing their tops in dalliance fair,
As if its very life were love.
God of the harvest, whence its breezes blow
Receive the humble thanks Thy creatures owe.

Our loaded wain comes winding home,
Then let us rest beneath the shade
Of this old oak, our verdant dome,
And watch the evening shadows fade.
O'er mount and meadow, lawn and glade,

*a Calvin.*

*b* Ps. cxviii. 17; Is. xxxviii. 18, 19.

*v.* 17. *Dr. Okes*, 211.

*vv.* 17, 18. *Dr. M. Hole*, ii. 105.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

"Soon as the morning trembles o'er the sky, and, unperceived, unfolds the spreading day; before the ripen'd fields the reapers stand in fair array, each by the lass he loves, to bear the rougher part, and mitigate, by nameless gentle offices, her toil. At once they stoop, and swell the lusty sheaves; while through their cheerful band the rural talk, the rural scandal, and the rural jest, fly harmless, to deceive the tedious time, and steal unfelt the sultry hours away. Behind the master walks, builds up the shocks; and, conscious, glancing oft on every side his sated eye, feels his heart heave with joy."—*Thomson*

They spread their deep'ning tints of grey,
Till all the scene their hues pervade,
And twilight glories melt away.
God of the world, who round Thy curtain throws,
Thanks for the time of quiet and repose.

How still is nature all around!
No song is sung, no voice is heard,
Save here and there a murmuring sound,
As if some restless sleeper stirr'd;
The grasshopper, night's clam'rous bird,
Chirps gay, but all is hushed beside;
And silence is the soothing word,
Whose spell diffuses far and wide.
God of the universe, by night and day,
We bless Thee for the gifts we ne'er can pay.[d]

"And see the country, far diffused around, one boundless blush, one white impurpled shower of mingled blossoms: where the raptured eye hurries from joy to joy." —*Thomson.*

*d* *Thomson.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH.*

author and date,—unknown

*Thanksgiving on recovery fr. perilous sickness.*

1–4. (1) **I love**,[a] this express. properly stands alone, as if the full heart needed not to express its object. Then the next sentence should read, "because the Lord habitually heareth." (2) **as . . live**, *lit.* in my days.[b] (3) **sorrows of death**, comp. Dav.'s language, Ps. xviii. 4, 5. Intense figures for painful sickness, imperilling life. **pains**, straits, or nets. **hell**, Hades, the unseen world of spirits, not the place of punishment for the wicked. (4) **called . . Lord**, comp. prayer of Hezekiah. Is. xxxvii. 2, 3.[c]

*Prayer answered and gratitude expressed* (*vv.* 1, 2).—I. The testimony which David bears. He tells his own experience respecting prayer. 1. Note the way he used his knowledge of the Lord; 2. The way in which his knowledge was confirmed; 3. The way in which he communicates this experimental knowledge. II. The effect produced on his heart. 1. He was constrained to love God; 2. Inspired with confidence for the future, his heart was filled with gratitude—hope—made strong. Apply:—(1) Use past mercies for future approaches; (2) Be not afraid to place confidence in a prayer-hearing God; (3) Pray always; (4) Forget not your vows.[d]

*a* Ps. xviii. 1.

*b* Is. xxxix. 8.

*c* A Jewish tradition refers this Ps. to Hezekiah. See *St. Basil, Op.* i. pt. 2; *W. Cradock, Divine Drops*, 106.

*v.* 2. *T. Scott*, v. 531.

*vv.* 3, 4. *J. R. Pitman*, 468; *J. C. Lloyd*, 72.

*d* *Stems and Twigs.*

"The tongue was intended for a Divine organ, but the devil often plays upon it."—*Jeremy Taylor.*

5–8. (5) **gracious**, *etc.*,[a] he extols God's mercy to him, and so leaves us to assume that he was healed and recovered. (6) **simple**, inoffensive, guileless, dependent. Comp. our Lord's requirements that His disciples should be as little children.[b] (7) **rest**, that confidence in God wh. the Psalmist habitually cherished, but wh. pain and peril had, for a time, disturbed. (8) **death . . tears . . falling**, gathering up all human calamities.[c]

*The soul's rest* (*v.* 7).—I. In what sense is God the soul's rest? I. Repose from doubt; 2. Refuge from fear; 3. Sufficiency in want; 4. The centre of affection. II. When ought we to adopt this language? 1. When we feel inclined to depart from God; 2. When we have really backslidden from Him; 3. When we have received special benefits from Him.[d]

*The best rest* (*v.* 7).—Come home, my soul; I cry after thee to hasten back again. It is no place for thee out upon the dark waters. Return, O dove, return to the ark. Thy home is with thy God. In the body or out of the body, there is perfect peace

*a* Ps. ciii. 13, cxi. 4, cxii. 4.

*b* Mat. v. 5, xi. 25.

"In the Book of Prov. the term 'simple' is otherwise used, denoting the simplicity of one whose moral understanding is dwarfed." —*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* Ps. lvi. 13.

*d* *W. W. Whythe.*

*v.* 7. *D. Wilcox*, ii. 109; *Dr J.*

*Witherspoon*, iii. 169; *T. Thompson*, 200.

"It takes a good many shovelfuls of earth to bury the truth."—*Swiss Proverb.*

for thee. Well did Babylas, martyr of Antioch, employ these words at his execution: "Return, O my soul, unto thy rest, because the Lord hath blessed thee. Because Thou hast delivered my soul from death, mine eyes from tears, and my feet from falling; I shall walk before Thee in the land of the living." Sadly were the same abused by a reference to the dogma of a sleep of the soul, in an inscription on the tombstone of Dr. Priestley: "Return unto thy rest, O my soul; for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee."

9—11. (9) **land of the living**, to wh. the sick man felt himself restored.[a] (10) **I believe**, or I do believe: I have learned trust in God by painful experience. **therefore**, *etc.*, better, "For I must speak;" I must confess it; while afflicted I have been hasty, and despairing. (11) **liars**, hypocrites, in sense of failing those who trust in them; deceitful as a broken reed.[b]

"*Shut your ash pan*" (*v.* 11).—Just before crossing the Hackensack River, on the New York and Erie Railroad, not long since, I noticed by the road-side a large sign bearing in very boldly-painted letters the direction at the head of my article. I wondered what the singular and impertinent counsel meant, when in a moment I found the train on a long, low, wooden bridge. I at once saw the force and propriety of the signboard suggestion. Burning coals dropping from the open ash pan of the locomotive might destroy the bridge, interrupt travel, imperil life, and cause numberless embarrassments in a financial way. So it is very important that the faithful engineer heed the signboard, "Shut your ash pan." I saw in the admonition a reminder of the words of James, "The tongue is a fire." On my return home I described the matter to my little six-year-old, making a practical application of it, referring to the quick, burning words he is too apt to speak once in a while. The story was interesting, and the motto odd, but applicable. But when I pressed the practical point too strongly, the little fellow looked up into my face, and with a serio-comic air said, "Papa, shut your ash pan." The illustration in itself is a good one, but I doubt whether I should recommend either parents or teachers to use it. It is a sword with two edges.

12—14. (12) **render**, as a fitting expression of gratitude and renewed trust. (13) **cup of salvation**, or deliverances, prob. only a poetical fig. for a portion or lot. "Many see in the word an allusion to the cup passed round at the Paschal meal."[a] **call upon**, in praise and prayer. (14) **I will**, *etc.*,[b] Heb. is stronger, and should be rendered "*O may I do so now.*" etc.

*A return demanded* (*v.* 2).—I. Consider God's benefits. 1. Creation; 2. Preservation; 3. Redemption. II. Consider the question. 1. His demands; 2. His justice; 3. Our sufficiency; 4. Our gracious ability.[c]

*Services due to God* (*v.* 12).—We may use the words of Socrates to his scholar, who saw in the contemplation of nature only a proof of his own insignificance, and concluded "that the gods had no need of him," which drew this answer from the sage:—"The greater the munificence they have shown in the care of thee, so much the more honour and service thou owest them."

"Give not thy tongue too great a liberty, lest it take thee prisoner. A word unspoken is, like the sword in the scabbard, thine; if vented, thy sword is in another's hand. If thou desire to be held wise, be so wise as to hold thy tongue."—*Quarles.*

*a Rashi's* comment is, "I will bring the drink offerings for the thanksgivings which I vowed, according as it says, 'I will offer to Thee the sacrifice of thanksgiving.'"

*b* Ps. lxvi. 13—15.

*c W. W. Whythe.*

"You have deserved of memore than reward can answer. Were the main ocean crusted into land

*Thankfulness and murmuring.*—
Some murmur when their sky is clear
And wholly brought to view,
If one small speck of dark appear
In their great heaven of blue;
And some with thankful love are filled
If but one streak of light,
One ray of God's good mercy, gild
The darkness of their night.
In palaces are hearts that ask,
In discontent and pride,
Why life is such a dreary task,
And all good things denied?
And hearts in poorest huts admire
How Love has in their aid
(Love that never seems to tire)
Such rich provision made.[d]

**15. precious,** weighty. "It is no light matter to Jehovah that His servants suffer and die."[a] **death,** to his saints, *i.e.* wh. is sent on His saints.

*The death of saints* (*v.* 15).—I. Things that render the death of a saint precious. 1. Its rareness; 2. Its intrinsic excellence; 3. Its testimony to the truth of religion; 4 Its consequences to the saint himself. II. The things by which God testifies that the death of the saints is precious in His sight. 1. By His watchful care over their lives; 2. By His punishment of their persecutors; 3. By the consolation He administers to them in a dying hour.[b]

*Anywhere the place for a Christian to die* (*v.* 15).—There is something that touches the imagination of people in the thought of a minister's dropping down dead in the pulpit; but I do not think I should be any nearer heaven if I died in my pulpit than if I died on my farm, or on a railroad car, or on a vessel at sea. Where the soldier is fighting his king's battle—that is the place for him to die. Whatever his posture may be—whether he is standing with uplifted hand to smite the enemy, or is reclining for repose—that is the place. Put on the harness that God has given you, and walk up to your strength, and let the Master call you when He wants you. Work in the spirit of love, and hope, and faith, and trust. Know your immortality, and rejoice in it. Give your hand and your heart to the work which God's providence has appointed for you; and understand that that place is good enough to die in which is good enough to work in, and that that work is good enough to die on that is good enough to live on. I would not take away any sanctity from these higher states, but I would add sanctity to the lower elements of life.[c]

**16—19.** (16) **I am,** *i.e.* I hereby devote myself, my restored life, afresh to Thee. **son . . handmaid,** as it were "a home-born slave." **bonds,** those of affliction. Free, the Psalmist felt longing desire to bind himself for ever to God. (17) **sacrifice,** *etc.*, He. xiii. 15, 16. (18) **pay,** as *v.* 14. (19) **in the courts,** so making public acknowledgment of the Div. goodness; comp. action of Hezekiah.[a]

*The emphatic profession* (*v.* 16).—I. The declaration of service. **I am Thy servant**—1. By election; 2. By choice; 3. By covenant and universal monarchy were mine, here should the gift be placed."—*Dryden. d Apb. Trench.*

"Truth is the most powerful thing in the world, since fiction can only please by its resemblance to it."—*Shaftesbury.*

*a* "Babylas, Bishop of Antioch, in the Decian persecution, advanced cheerfully to death, singing these words."—*Delitzsch.* "The apostolical constitutions recommend among others, this verse to be sung at the funeral of the faithful."—*Spk. Com.* Ps. lxxii. 14.

*v.* 15. *S. Scattergood*, ii. 367; *W. Romaine*, vi. 256; *T. Blackley*, ii. 252; *Dr. J. Fletcher*, iii. 231; *W. Hancock*, 23; *G. W. Lewis*, i. 365; *C. E. Kennaway*, ii. 110; *J. C. Hare*, 485.

*b W. W. Whythe.* A tear dropped in the silence of a sick chamber often rings in heaven with a sound which belongs not to earthly trumpet or bells.

*c H. W. Beecher.*

*a* 2 Ki. xx. 5; Is. xxxviii. 22.

*v.* 16. *Dr. E. Lake*, 195; *Dr. J. Witherspoon*, iv. 146; *S. Lavington*, i. 528; *T. H. Hutton*, 207.

*v.* 18. *Dr. R. Bur-*

*rowes*, 1; *Dr. R. Bundy*, ii. 273.

*b Stems and Twigs.*

"God! who is the Father of spirits, is the most tolerant. Man! who is the first of animals, is the most oppressive — yet he calls himself the shadow of the Almighty. Man becomes angry, and punishes for every little affront; God bears with all the insults and vices of man, who daily and hourly is employed in endeavouring to offend Him. Man pretends to admire the benign nature of the Deity; yet when he sees another imitate His clemency and good-nature, he calls him a fool. So much for man's consistency." — *Jerdan.*

*c Dr. J. Todd.*

"Men never make truths; they only recognise the value of this currency of God. They find truths as men sometimes find bills in the street, and only recognise the value of that which other parties have drawn." —*Beecher.*

nant; 4. By obligation. II. The recognition of the Divine claim. III. The celebration of Divine grace. Apply:—1. It is desirable to be a professed servant of God: 2. It is lamentable to be only a professed servant of God.[b]—*Riches of God.*—Suppose you should go and visit a man who was so rich that he had his trees covered with silk of the most beautiful colours, and even his most common things covered with gold and silver, and adorned by the most curious art. Would you not think him a rich man? And if he were known to be a good man, and true to his word, and he should tell you that he would be your friend, and always take care of you, would you have any fear that he would not do it? God is richer than all this. He is so rich that He can put more of what is beautiful upon a single lily or tulip, than the great King Solomon could put on all his clothing. The hoarse, homely peacock carries more that is beautiful upon his tail than the richest king could ever show. And even the poor butterfly, which is to live but a few hours, has a more glorious dress than the proudest, richest man that ever lived. God can dress this poor worm up so because He is rich. If then He can take such care of the lilies, the birds, and insects, and make them more beautiful than man can ever be, will He not take care of us if we obey Him? Suppose you had a rich father—so rich that he had a hogshead full of gold, and a great barn full of silver; do you think that if you were to be a good child he would ever refuse to take care of you? But God has more gold and silver laid up in the ground, which men have not yet dug up, than would make a mountain—it may be thousands of mountains. Can He not take care of you? Suppose your father had more oxen, and horses, and cattle than you could count over in a day, or in a week—would he not be able to take care of his child and give him everything he needs? Yes. But God has "cattle upon ten thousand hills," and "every beast of the forest" is His, and His are "all the fowls of the air." Can He not give you food from all these cattle, and clothe you, and give you beds from the feathers of all these fowls? Yes; He is able to do it all. Suppose your father was so rich that he had ten thousand men to work for him every day, all at work, and all paid to their mind, and all happy in working for him. Would you have any fears that he could not take care of you and do you good? But God has more servants than these. He has all the good people on earth in His employment, and all the angels in heaven. He pays them all. And if you need anything, He can send one or a million of these His servants to you to help you.[c]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND SEVENTEENTH.*

author and date,—unknown

*Doxology of the universal Church.*

1, 2. (1) nations, or Gentiles, *see* Ro. xv. 11.[a] (2) merciful kindness, the more usual term is "loving-kindness." toward us, *i.e.* Israel.[b] truth, *i.e.* faithfulness to promises. endureth, *Heb.* more simply, "is for ever."

*Manifold mercy.*—As John Bunyan says, all the flowers in God's garden are double; there is no single mercy: nay, they are not only double flowers, but they are manifold flowers. There are many flowers upon one stalk, and many flowers in one flower. You shall think you have but one mercy; but you shall

*a* Eph. iii. 5, 6.

*b* "An indication of those wider sympathies wh. appear to have manifested them-

find it to be a whole flock of mercies. Our Beloved is unto us a bundle of myrrh, a cluster of camphor. When you lay hold upon one golden link of the chain of grace, you pull, pull, pull; but, lo! as long as your hand can draw there are fresh "linked sweetnesses" of love still to come. Manifold mercies! Like the drops of a lustre, which reflect a rainbow of colours when the sun is glittering upon them, and each one, when turned in different ways, from its prismatic form, shows all the varieties of colour; so the mercy of God is one and yet many; the same, yet ever changing; a combination of all the beauties of love blended harmoniously together.[c]

selves after the exile."—*Perowne.*

*v.* 1. *Bp. Hoadly*, iii. 679; *J. R. Pitman*, 475.

*v.* 2. *Dr. J. Leland*, i. 283; *T. Dwight*, i. 166.

*c Spurgeon.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND EIGHTEENTH.*

**author and date,—unknown**

*A liturgical Psalm for a festival day.*

**1—4.** (1) **O give thanks,** the formula adopted on occasion of laying the foundation-stone of the second temple.[a] **mercy,** Heb. *chesed*, strictly, "gracious goodness." (2) **Israel,** the whole nation. If the Ps. was composed after the Exile, it is remarkable that the restored people should be called by the comprehensive term "Israel." (3) **house of Aaron,** the priestly class, regarded as religious leaders. (4) **fear the Lord,** the more pious among the people.[b]

*Mercy a refuge.*—There is a story of one, that, falling asleep, dreamed that he was in a large field hedged in on all sides with thunder, lightning, hailstorms, and the like tempestuous weather; and that he saw certain houses afar off, and, making towards one of them, craved admittance till the storm were over. "What art thou?" said the master of the house. "I am such a one," says he, telling his name. "And I," says the master, "am called Justice: thou must not look for any comfort from me, but rather the contrary." At another house, he was answered, that there dwelt Truth—one that he never loved, and must therefore expect no shelter there. Well, he goes to the third, the house of Peace; and there he finds the like entertainment. In the midst of this distraction, he lights upon the house of Mercy; and there, humbly desiring entrance, was made welcome, and refreshed.[c]

a Ezr. iii. 11; comp. also 1 Chr. xvi. 34; 2 Chr. v. 13, vii. 3; Jer. xxxiii. 10, 11.

b Comp. Ps. cxv. 9—11.

It is however possible that the "proselytes of the gate" are referred to in this expression.

See *J. Boys*, 861.

*v.* 1. *J. Grose*, ii. 1.

**5—9.** (5) **in distress,** "from out of the straits into wh. I had come." **and set me,** or by setting me. This was Jehovah's answer. **large place,** open space in wh. I could breathe freely, contrasting with the "straits" he had been in. (6) **on my side,** *Heb.* "for me."[a] (7) **help me,** *i.e.* "Jehovah helps my helpers, therefore I shall see triumph over mine enemies."[b] (8) **trust in,** find refuge in.[c] (9) **princes,** of other nations,[d] Ps. cxlvi. 3.

*God for us more than all against us* (*v.* 6).—I. What is implied? 1. A sense of His care; 2. The enjoyment of His protection; 3. The feeling of His love. II. Why need we not fear? 1. He is wise; 2. He is mighty; 3. He is good; 4. He is faithful.[c]

*Luther summoned to Worms* (*v.* 6).—When Luther was summoned to attend the diet at Worms, his friends, notwithstanding the safe-conduct granted to him by the Emperor Charles V., apprehending danger to his person, would have dissuaded him

*c Spencer.*

a Ps. lvi. 4—11.

b Ps. liv. 7, cxii. 8.

c Ps. xxxiii. 16—19.

d The Jews had learnt by painful experience how little they could trust in princes, for the work which had been begun under Cyrus had been threatened under Cambyses, and had been suspended under the pseudo-Smerdis, and it was not till Darius came to the throne that

they were allowed to resume it."—*Perowne.*

*v.* 6. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 255.

*e W. W. Wiythe.*

*f Cheever.*

"Amongst the many acts of gratitude we owe to God, it may be accounted one to study and contemplate the perfections and beauties of His works of creation. Every new discovery must necessarily raise in us a fresh sense of the greatness, wisdom, and power of God. He hath so ordered things that almost every part of the creation is for our benefit, either to the support of our being, the delight of our senses, or the agreeable exercise of the rational faculty. If there are some few poisonous animals and plants fatal to man, these may serve to heighten the contrary blessings; since we could have no idea of benefits were we insensible of their contraries; and seeing God has given us reason, by which we are able to choose the good and avoid the evil, we suffer very little from the malignant parts of the creation."—*Edwards.*

*g Dr. Farrar.*

*a* "Comp. Ezr. iv. 9, where, after a long list of hostile tribes environing Jerusalem, the historian adds, 'the rest of *the nations* whom the great and noble Asnapper,' etc."—*Wordsworth.*

from going thither. Luther replied, "I am determined to enter the city in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, though as many devils should oppose me as there are tiles upon all the houses at Worms." He was accompanied from Wirtemberg by some divines and one hundred horse: but he took only eight horsemen into Worms. When he stepped out of the carriage, he said, in the presence of a great number of persons, "God shall be on my side."*f*—*A kingdom shaken by a miner's son.*—It is the 15th of April, 1521. On a day of spring the potentates of Europe are assembled in the great hall of a German town; bishops are there, and knights, and lords, and dukes, and ambassadors, and princes, in all their dignity and state, and there is the representative of the guilty splendour of the Papacy, and there above all is the still youthful emperor of all the world, the mighty autocrat of Germany, and Spain, and Italy, and of the Indies. Into the midst of them all is ushered a poor monk, son of a German miner. He has been reminded of the fate of John Huss, the great reformer of Bohemia. "Huss," he answers, "was burnt, but the truth was not burnt with him." He has been warned of his extreme peril. "The devil saw in my heart," he wrote, "that if there should be as many devils at Worms as tiles upon the house-roofs, I should joyfully have plunged among them." In his poor mean garb of serge he enters the august and glittering assembly. A blunt old soldier, celebrated in the wars of that day, pats him on the back as he enters, and says, "Little monk, little monk, you need more courage for your battle to-day than any soldier of us all; but if you have God on your side, go on and fear not." That monk was Martin Luther, a name never to be mentioned without honour by all true sons of the Reformed Church. Pale and emaciated, he fronts them all; they may bend on him their sternest frowns; they may threaten him if they will with the dagger or the stake. "I may not and will not recant," he says, "because to act against conscience is unholy and unsafe; here I stand, I can do no other; God help me!" So, with a burst of tears, he ends. But what came of it? At that moment the Reformation was secured; at that moment an immoral apostasy, a sacerdotal usurpation, a guilty tyranny, were shaken to the ground. "It is," says a modern writer, "the greatest moment in the modern history of man. Had Luther at that moment done other, it had all been otherwise." Yes, at that moment again goodness triumphed over evil, truth over falsehood, right over might; in the person of atheist popes and tyrannic emperors the prince of this world was judged.*g*

10—13. (10) all nations, the surrounding tribes, wh. sadly harassed the returned exiles.*a* compassed, "the repetition of this word four times marked their close and pertinacious hostility." destroy them, cut them off. (11) yea, this repetition expresses deep and anxious feeling. (12) like bees, De. i. 44. fire of thorns, wh. blazes furiously, but is easily and suddenly extinguished.*b* (13) thou, singling out the leader of the hostile hosts, and apostrophising him.

*The Rev. T. Bradbury* (*v.* 13).—The Rev. Thomas Bradbury was remarkable for punctuality in the time he devoted to family worship. One evening when the bell had rung, the servants went up to prayer, and forgot to shut the area door next the street. Some men observed the door open, and one of them

entered the house to rob it. Creeping upstairs, he heard the old gentleman praying that God would preserve his house from thieves. The man was thunderstruck, and unable to persist in his design. He returned and told the circumstance to his companions, who abused him on account of his timidity; but he was so affected that, some time after, he related the circumstance to Mr. Bradbury, and became an attendant on his ministry.[c]

14—17. (14) **strength . . salvation**, Ex. xv. 2. (15) **tabernacles**, or private dwellings.[a] **valiantly**, *lit.* "achieves strength." (16) **right**, *etc.*, this repetition was prob. a response from the people. (17) **I shall not die**,[b] the outbreak of personal feeling in a liturgical Psalm leads us to suppose there was a solo-leader and recurring chorus.

*Domestic happiness* (*v.* 15).—Consider—I. What may be said in commendation of it. Consider it—1. In reference to our avocations and cares; 2. In relation to the afflictions of life; 3. In reference to the good things of this life; 4. In reference to the snares and seductions of the world. II. Open its sources and examine on what it depends. It does not depend on rank and influence. 1. Order is indispensable; 2. Self-government; 3. Good sense; 4. Religious principles.[c]

*Wickliffe.*—At one period of his life this eminent reformer's health was considerably impaired by the labour of producing his numerous compositions, and the excitement inseparable from the restless hostilities of his enemies. Being supposed to be in dangerous circumstances, his old antagonists, the Mendicants, conceived it next to impossible that so notorious a heretic should find himself near a future world without the most serious apprehensions of Divine anger. While they declared that the dogmas of the reformer had arisen from the suggestions of the great enemy, they anticipated some advantages to their cause could the dying culprit be induced to make any recantation of his published opinions. Wickliffe was in Oxford when this sickness arrested his activity, and confined him to his chamber. From the four orders of friars four doctors, who were also called regents, were gravely deputed to wait on their expiring enemy; and to these the same number of civil officers, called senators of the city and aldermen of the wards, were added. When this embassy entered the apartment of the Rector of Lutterworth he was seen stretched on his bed. Some kind wishes were first expressed as to his better health, and the blessing of a speedy recovery. It was presently suggested that he must be aware of the many wrongs which the whole Mendicant brotherhood had sustained from his attacks, especially in his sermons and in certain of his writings: and, as death was now apparently about to remove him, it was sincerely hoped that he would not conceal his penitence, but distinctly revoke whatever he had preferred against them to their injury. The sick man remained silent and motionless until this address was concluded. He then beckoned his servants to raise him in his bed; and, fixing his eyes on the persons assembled, summoned all his remaining strength as he exclaimed aloud, "I shall not die, but live; and shall again declare the evil deeds of the friars." The doctors and their attendants now hurried from his presence, and they lived to feel the truth of his saying; nor will it be easy to imagine another

b "Thorn bushes, in the East, are destroyed in the cultivated fields by fire in the heat of summer. The fire quickly spreads everywhere, but soon dies out, and the bushes are reduced to ashes." —*Knapp.*

c *R. T. S.*

a "We can imagine with what special force the words would come to those who then were, or had but recently been, keeping their feast of tabernacles, and rejoicing in the great deliverance wh. God had given them."—*Plumptre.*

b "Though I love all the Ps., yet I delight in this Ps. especially, and look upon it as written specially for me; indeed it has come to my aid again and again, and supported me in heavy trials, when kaiser, king, philosopher, and saint could do nought."—*Luther.*

Is. xxxviii. 19; Ro. xiv. 8.

*v.* 15. *Dr. J. Langhorne*, i. 56; *J. Charlesworth*, iii. 209; *J. Stock*, 105; *W. Jay*, ix. 391.

*vv.* 15, 16. *J. Saurin*, ii. 207.

*v.* 17. *Luther*, i. 342.

c *W. Jay.*

scene more characteristic of the parties composing it, or of the times in which it occurred.

18—21. (18) **chastened**, for correction.[a] (19) **open . . gates**, Ps. xxiv. 7. The gates of the temple are referred to, which the delivered and restored desire to enter, that they might praise the Lord. (20) **this gate**,[b] before wh. the procession was standing, waiting for its opening. (21) **thee**, bec. fully recognising the Div. hand in deliverance.

*The rejected stone* (*v.* 21).—I. The fact: Christ rejected becomes the head of the corner. II. The cause: it is the Lord's doings. III. The result: it is marvellous in our eyes.[c]

22, 23. (22) **stone**, *etc.*, representing the Jewish nation, once exiled and contemptible, now reinstated.[a] **head . . corner**, either the foundation-stone or the *epistyle* or long block of stone resting upon the top of the columns supporting the roof. (23) **this**, *viz.*, the making a despised stone serve as the corner-stone. This was regarded as a Divine miracle.

*The corner-stone.*—The idea of the corner-stone, repeatedly alluded to in the Scriptures, is not to be taken from the science of modern or of classical architecture, but from the practice of building in remote and ruder ages. Imagine a massive stone, like those at Stonehenge or Abury, cut to a right angle, and laid in the building so that its two sides should lie along the two walls, which meet at a corner, and thus binding them together in such a way that neither force nor weather could dis-sever them. The term does not necessarily signify that it would be put at the top of the building; it only necessitates the idea of a very important position, which it would have if it lay a few courses above the lowest, so as to act by its weight on those below, and to serve as a renewed basis to those above. "The stone which the builders have thrown away is made to be the corner-stone." I understand this literally. It appears that, probably at the building of Solomon's temple, one of those stones which David had taken care to get provided and made ready for use was found fault with by the builders, and declared to be useless; and that God, for altogether different reasons, commanded, by a prophet, that this stone should be made the corner-stone. The Orientals regard the corner-stone as the one peculiarly holy stone in a temple, and that it confers sanctity on the whole edifice. It is therefore the more probable that, either by Urim or Thummim, the sacred lot of the Jews, or by a prophet, God was consulted which stone He would direct to be taken for the corner-stone. The answer was—"That which they have so perseveringly rejected, and declared to be quite unserviceable." Certainly it must have been for a very important reason that God positively appointed this stone to be the corner-stone. But the New Testament discloses it to us in Matt. xxi. 42, and 1 Pet. ii. 7, showing us that it referred to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Jewish nation would conduct themselves towards the Messiah precisely as the builders did towards this stone, and would reject Him; but God would select Him to be the Corner-stone, which should support and sanctify the whole Church.[b]

24, 25. (24) **made**, or brought about. Referring to the completion of the work of raising the temple, in wh. God had so graciously defended and helped them. (25) **save**, Heb. *Hosanna*,

*a* He. xii. 5—8.

*b* "The gate of the Israelites was upon the east side of the outer vestibule." —*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 18. *Dr. T. Horton*, 185; *H. Venn*, 166.

*v.* 21. *Luther*, i. 339.

*c R. V. Pryce, LL.B.*

*a* "The fig. is borrowed from the lately completed work of building. The head corner-stone is important, as that wh. unites two walls and supports the roof. It may poss. have been the custom to render this stone conspicuous with carving and decorations." *Jennings and Lowe.*

Mat. xxi. 42; Mk. xii. 10; Lu. xx. 17; Ac. iv. 11; Eph. ii. 20; 1 Pe. ii. 4, 7.

*v.* 22. *Bp. Andrewes*, ii. 270; *E. Erskine*, i. 578.

*vv.* 22, 23. *A. Roberts*, vi. 216.

"I will answer for it, the longer you read the Bible, the more you will like it; it will grow sweeter and sweeter; and the more you get into the spirit of it, the more you will get into the spirit of Christ." —*Romaine.*

*b From Dr. Smith and Michaelis.*

*v* 24. *Bp. Hackett*, 699; *Dr. M. Frank*, ii. 112;

i.e. "Save, I pray." prosperity, a Divine blessing to rest on the new temple.

*The Sabbath* (*v.* 24).—On this day—I. The validity of the Saviour's pretensions were established. II. The acceptance of His sacrifice was demonstrated. III. His victory over death was proclaimed. IV. The universal triumph of His religion was secured. V. The glorious resurrection of His people was guaranteed.[a]

*Sabbaths: What are they?*—

Bright shadows of true rest; some shoots of bliss;
Heaven once a week;
The next world's gladness prepossessed in this;
A day to seek
Eternity in time; the steps by which
We climb above all ages; lamps that light
Man through his heap of dark days; and the rich
And full redemption of the whole week's flight;
The pulleys unto headlong man; time's bower;
The narrow way;
Transplanted paradise: God's walking hour;
The cool o' the day;
The creature's jubilee; God's parle with dust;
Heaven here; man on those hills of myrrh, of flowers;
Angels descending; the returns of trust;
A gleam of glory after six days' showers;
The Church's love-feasts; time's prerogative
And interest
Deducted from the whole; the combs and hive,
And home of rest;
The milky way chalked out with suns; a clue
That guides through erring hours, and in full story;
A taste of heaven on earth; the pledge and cue
Of a full feast, and the out-courts of glory.[b]

*Bp. Beveridge*, iv. 271; *Dr. R. Fiddes*, 61; *W. Reeves*, 421; *J. Hales*, ii. 213; *D. Lamont*, iii. 301; *Dr. A. Grant*, ii. 57; *T. Blackley*, i. 82; *R. Hall*, v. 380; *Bp. Dehon*, ii. 9; *J. H. Newman*, vi. 103.

*a G. Brooks.*

"The Lord's-day. Stations on the line of your journey are not your journey's end, but each one brings you nearer. Such are our Lord's-days."—*Pulsford.*

*b Vaughan* (1695).

"If Sunday had not been observed as a day of rest during the last three centuries, I have not the smallest doubt that we should have been at this moment a poorer and less civilised people than we are."—*Lord Macaulay.*

26–29. (26) cometh . . Lord, "Blessed is he who enters into his sanctuary under the guardianship of Jehovah."[a] we have blessed, poss. the priestly response. (27) showed us light, Ps. iv. 6. bind, *etc.*, the sacrifices appear on the occasion to have been so many that they were tied up all over the priests' court, right up to the horns of the altar.[b] (28) my God, made the object of personal trust. Comp. Ex. xv. 2. (29) give thanks, as *v.* 1.

*The song and the sacrifice of gratitude* (*v.* 27).—I. The blessings acknowledged. 1. Saving knowledge is light; 2. Joy. comfort, happiness, are light; 3. Providential mercies are light; 4. Prospects of future glory are light. II. The consecration required. 1. There is a call to personal dedication; 2. An appeal for self-denying offerings to the cause of God.

*Note on v.* 26.—"We have wished you good luck, ye that are of the house of the Lord" (Prayer Book Version). "This is indeed the land of good wishes and overflowing compliments. Every passer-by has his 'Allah ybaràkèk' ('God bless you'). Conversation is sometimes, among strangers, made up of a very large proportion of these phrases. For example, 'Good morning:' answer, 'May your day be enriched.' 'By seeing you, you have enlightened the house by your presence.' 'Are you happy?' 'Happy; and you also?' 'Happy.' 'You are comfortable, I am

*a* See the Hosanna to Jesus, Mat. xxi. 9. See the formula of priestly blessing. Nu. vi. 27; De. xxi. 5; 2 Sa. vi. 18.

*b* So *Delitzsch.* "The altar in Herod's temple had, according to the Mishna, a number of brazen rings on the north side, to wh. the animals were secured."—*Jennings and Lowe.* "Decorate the festival with leafy boughs, even up to the horns of the altar."—So trans. *Luther, Tholuck,* etc. "Unto the horns, *i.e.* all the court over

until you come even to the hornes of the altar, intending hereby many sacrifices or boughs."—*Ainsworth.*
*c Jowett.*

comfortable:' meaning, 'I am comfortable if you are.' These sentences are often repeated; and after any pause it is usual to turn to your neighbour, and resume these courtesies many times. In the southern half of Palestine, I subsequently found the ordinary salutation between persons on the road to be, 'Owâfy,' literally, 'Good luck;' to which the person saluted replies, 'Alla Yâfek' ('May God give you good luck')."[c]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND NINETEENTH.*

author,—unknown: date, poss. exilic

*Praise of the law of God.*

An alphabetical Psalm.

1—4. (1) undefiled, perfect, in the sense of sincere.[a] way, of the revealed will of God. walk, order their conduct and conversation. law, Heb. *thorah*, the whole code of God's revealed will. (2) testimonies, another name for the law, as in Ps. lxxviii. 5. Commands to do right and to shun wrong. whole heart, "an expression characteristic of this Ps., *vv.* 10, 34, 58, 69, 145." (3) no iniquity, they do not wilfully wander aside from His ways. (4) precepts,[b] Ne. ix. 14. diligently, with strict attention and constancy.

*The best pursuit* (*v.* 2).—I. The pursuit specified. 1. The object proposed; 2. The conduct described. II. The obedience required. 1. It must be regulated by His Word; 2. It must be conformable to His will. III. The happiness enjoyed. 1. They have enjoyments; 2. They have blessed anticipations.[c]

*Novel use of Psalm cxix.*—The Covenanters, in the time of the civil wars, were exceedingly fond of singing psalms. When the great Montrose was taken prisoner his chaplain, Wishart, the elegant historian of his deeds, shared the same fate with his patron, and was condemned to the same punishment. Being desired on the scaffold to name what Psalm he wished to have sung, he selected the cxix., consisting of twenty-four parts. In this he was guided by God; for before two-thirds of the Psalm was sung, a pardon arrived. Thus remarkably was his life preserved.[d]

5—8. (5) O that, the fervent expression of the heart's desire. directed, or firmly fixed and established. The earnest man's anxiety is caused by this—it is so hard to make conduct match the purposes of the heart.[a] statutes, properly applied to public law. (6) ashamed, by being disappointed of Thy promises to the upright and obedient.[b] (7) learned, by sanctified experiences. judgments, decrees, laws,[c] issuing in acts, not punishments. (8) utterly, or very far, "lest losing Divine strength I fall."

*Laziness in Bible reading.*—The following confession and prayer, by Rev. Dr. Thomas Fuller, it is to be feared covers the case of many others besides himself: "Lord, I discover an arrant laziness in my soul. For when I am to read a chapter in the Bible, before I begin it, I look where it endeth; and if it endeth not on the same side, I cannot keep my hand from turning over the leaf, to measure the length thereof on the other side; if it swell to many verses I begin to grudge. Surely my heart is not rightly affected. Were I truly hungry after heavenly food, I would not complain of meat. Scourge, Lord, this laziness of soul. Make the reading of Thy Word not a penance but a pleasure upon me. Teach me, that as among heaps of gold, all

*a* Re. iii. 4.

*b* Fr. Lat. *præcipere*, to take beforehand, to instruct. Applied esp. to a command respecting *moral conduct.*

*v.* 1. *W. Langhorne*, ii. 105; *N. Douglas*, 99; *J. R. Pitman*, 489.

*v.* 4. *Dr. A. Gerard*, ii. 203; *J. Hume*, 282.

*c Eta* in 400 Sks.

*d R. T. S.*

*a* Ro. vii. 19—23.

*b* "Put to shame, my hope being frustrated. This is the shame meant, not shame of conscience in comparing a man's life with the requirements of the law."—*Perowne.*

*c* Utterances, beyond the written law, made by a judge or lawgiver. See Ex. xxi. 1, xxiv. 3; Le. xviii. 4, 5.

"A page digested is better than a volume hurriedly read."—*Macaulay.*

equally pure, that is best which is the biggest, so I may esteem that chapter in Thy Word the best which is the longest."

9—12. (9) young man, who is specially exposed to temptation, and in whom principle is scarcely established. taking heed, or keeping watch on himself.[a] (10) wander, stray, step aside, either in ignorance, or in wilfulness. Man's watchfulness is insufficient, it must be embraced in a Div. watchfulness of him, and for Him. (11) hid, so as to make a personal and jealously guarded treasure, "no merely outward rule of conduct, but a power and a life within."[b] (12) blessed, *etc.*, the glowing desire to obey filling the soul of the Psalmist with holy joy in God.[c]

*Purifying the way* (*v.* 9).—I. Some of the causes of the pollution of the young. 1. Want of religious principle; 2. Strength of passion; 3. Influence of corrupt example. II. The means of purification. 1. The Bible sets worldly pleasures in their true light; 2. Points out the purer sorts of pleasure; 3. Exhibits examples of early piety; 4. Discloses a remedy for all pollutions.[d]—*The best thing in the best place.*—I. The best thing. "Thy Word." Why the best? The Word of God, word of a friend, guide, judge, Saviour; word of wisdom, love, power; about God, man, sin, holiness, heaven, hell, death, the judgment; to convince the sinner, comfort the penitent, cheer the sad, etc. II. In the best place. "Mine heart." Why the best? Because out of heart are issues of life. With the heart man believeth, etc., loveth, etc. Many have t only in the memory, etc. Personal appeal; "mine heart." "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." III. For the best purpose. "Not sin." Why the best? That sin, the worst thing, may be prevented. How is this prevented? If that word is in our heart, we shall see the exceeding sinfulness of sin and the beauty of holiness. We shall desire to escape the wages of sin and win eternal life. Learn—1. To meditate in the Word of God; 2. To seek understanding, believing, and loving hearts; 3. To practise what we learn. "To him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

*Dr. Franklin.*—At the time when the celebrated Dr. Franklin lay upon his death-bed, he was visited by a young man who had a great respect for his judgment in all things; and having entertained doubts as to the truth of the Scriptures, he thought that this awful period afforded a suitable opportunity of consulting the doctor on this important subject. Accordingly, he introduced it in a solemn and weighty manner, inquiring of Franklin what were his sentiments as to the truth of the Scriptures. On the question being put, although he was in a very weak state, and near his decease, he replied, "Young man, my advice to you is, that you cultivate an acquaintance with, and a firm belief in, the Holy Scriptures: this is your certain interest."

13—16. (13) my lips, medium for commending God's law to others.[a] (14) all riches, all manner of riches.[b] (15) meditate, prob. "sing," or "speak of," Ps. civ. 34. ways, "the paths of life marked out by Thy law." (16) delight myself, actually find my chief pleasure in.

*Religious meditation* (*v.* 15).—I. We ought to meditate on the things of God, because we thus get the real nutriment out of them. II. We are not supported physically by merely taking

*a* "By keeping his eye fixed on Thy Word, and by framing his life according to it; as a careful pilot, 'his eye to heaven, his hand on the helm.'"—*Wordsworth.*

*b* *Perowne.*

*c* Comp. Ps. xxv. 8.

*d* *G. Brooks.*

A poor prisoner, being confined in a dark dungeon, had no light, except for a few moments when his food was brought him; he used to take his Bible and read a chapter, saying he could find his mouth in the dark, when he could not read.

"Grace makes a heart-memory, even where there is no good head-memory (Ps. cxix. 11)."—*Boston.*

Galen, the celebrated physician of Rome, when studying anatomy, was so struck with the perfection and exquisite mechanism of the human hand and arm, that he composed a hymn to the Deity, expressing his admiration of so excellent a work, and his adoration of the God who made it.

*a* De. vi. 7.

*b* Pr. ii. 4, iii. 13, 15, viii. 10, 11, 19, xvi. 16, xxii. 1.

"For solitude sometimes is best society."—*Milton.*

food into our mouth, but by processes of digestion. III. The reason many make so little progress in Divine things is because they neglect this.[e]

*The uses of meditation* (*v.* 15).—Meditation: it is in this way one of the greatest of English engineers, a man uncouth and unaccustomed to regular discipline of mind, is said to have accomplished his most marvellous triumphs. He threw bridges over almost impracticable torrents, and pierced the eternal mountains for his viaduct. Sometimes a difficulty brought all the work to a pause; then he would shut himself up in his room, eat nothing, speak to no one, abandon himself intensely to the contemplation of that on which his heart was set; and at the end of two or three days would come forth serene and calm, walk to the spot, and quietly give orders which seemed the result of superhuman intuition. This was meditation.[d]

17—20. (17) may live, granting him life would be recognised as bountiful and gracious dealing. and keep, or, so will I keep; if I live, I will. (18) open, *etc.*,[a] the Psalmist evidently realises that the best things in the Div. Word are only "spiritually discerned."[b] (19) stranger,[c] having no experience, or knowledge of the world, so needing the constant guidance of Div. law. (20) breaketh, with vehement desire, *lit.* "is broken small, is crushed."[d]

*Spiritual blindness* (*v.* 18).—I. The Bible is a book of wonders—1. Concerning God; 2. The Saviour; 3. Man; 4. Divine influence; 5. The future. II. The wonders of the Bible are not seen by the natural man. He does not—1. Attend to them: 2. Understand them; 3. Believe in them; 4. Like them. II. It is the office of the Holy Spirit to unveil the wonders of the Bible. 1. He counteracts the influence of prejudice and passion: 2. He communicates proper dispositions; 3. He forms and sustains the habit of prayer.[e]

*Study and prayer.—Christmas Evans.*—Let us look at him in one of these moods. Two young ministers one day call at his cottage, and after Catherine has admitted them, with a few quiet words, they see, sitting at a little round table set out for tea, an evidently abstracted man, withdrawn from every object around him, Bible in hand, and in agonising thought. He takes no more notice of the strangers than if they had been familiar pieces of household furniture. He moves to and fro in his chair, performing the "pumping" process of which John Foster has told us, but with little result. Still he cannot abandon the endeavour. He closes and opens his eyes, but upon other scenes, and his face looks dark and clouded. His first cup has been drunk long ago, and his wife nudges him and asks him to forward the cup to be replenished. All unconscious of her meaning, he hands her the little Bible which he holds in his hand. Still the vision does not brighten. He becomes restless, gets up from his seat, and turns over page after page of Dr. Owen's volumes, tries another Puritan divine and another, but in vain. What can he do? The result does not come: still he cannot let go the process. One resource remains. He there and then, undistracted by earthly presence, bends his knee in fervent prayer, and pours forth the most ardent supplications to Him who can "open the eyes of the understanding." Again he resumes his work, and his face grows calmer and brighter, his expression of agony dies away, and in a short

"Our bodies are our gardens, to the which our wills are gardeners."—*Shakespeare.*

*e C. H. Spurgeon.*

*d F. W. Robertson.*

"Reflection is a flower of the mind, giving out wholesome fragrance; but reverie is the same flower when rank and running to seed."—*Tupper.*

*a* Re. iii. 18.

*b* "Things hidden, it may be, under the letter, and concealed, except from those whose eyes are opened of God."—*Spk. Com.* Lu. xxiv. 32, 45; 2 Cor. iii. 14—16.

*c* Sojourner.

*d* "Bp. Taylor speaks somewhere of 'the violence of the desire bursting itself with its fulness into dissolution.'"—*Perowne.*

*e G. Brooks.*

"Anything to induce men to read the Bible with attention. One chief cause of our present painful position is the ignorance of Scripture in which English gentlemen, even first-class men in our universities, have been educated."—*Hugh McNeile, Dean of Ripon.*

"The longer I live the more highly do I estimate the Christian Sabbath, and the more grateful do I feel toward those who impress its importance on the community."—*Daniel Webster.*

time he has succeeded. He now emerges from the struggle, cordially addresses his visitors, and becomes playful and genial as a child.[f]

[f] *D. M. Evans.*

21—24. (21) rebuked, by judgments. Rend. the second clause, "They that do err from Thy commandments are accursed." (22) reproach, *etc.*, these came to the man steadfast in obeying God's law, then as now. Shame is treated as a cloak or mantle covering the person. (23) sit and speak,[a] taking counsel together against him. (24) my counsellors, *Heb.* "men of my counsel."

*The Bible against Popery.*—During the short reign of James II. of England, all attempts to enlighten the country by publications on the errors of Romanism were strictly suppressed, under pretext of their being "insulting to the king's religion." Booksellers' shops were ransacked by orders of the chancellor, and all such works were seized and committed to the flames. One James Glen, a bookseller in Edinburgh, bolder than the rest, got himself into trouble by declaring to the macers of the court, on their coming to search his premises, that he had one book in his shop more severe against Popery than all other books in the world; and on being required to show it, produced to them a copy of the Bible.[b]

[a] Da. vi. 9, 10.

"As year by year the tree adds another ring to its circumference, so every age has added to the testimony of the truth of the Bible."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

[b] *Whitecross.*

Truth seldom goes without a scratched face. Truth is God's daughter.

25—28. (25) cleaveth, Ps. xlv. 25. The grovelling posture was taken in extreme affliction. Job sat in ashes. In grief dust was thrown on the head. quicken, *i.e.* restore to vigorous life and health. (26) declared,[a] or made confession. ways, wanderings, failures. (27) understand,[b] comp. *v.* 18. (28) melteth,[c] Heb. *droppeth;* so to speak, "weeps itself away."

*An important prayer* (*v.* 25).—I. The import of this prayer. It implies—1. The deadness of the mind to spiritual things; 2. Inability to remove it; 3. A sense of the misery of such a state; 4. Expectation of help from God. II. The object of this prayer—quicken me. This he would desire—1. In relation to every part of the soul; 2. To every part of religion; 3. Its nature defined—according to Thy word—a connection of promise and of instrumentality. III. Recommend the adoption of this prayer—1. If you would realise the influence of the Gospel; 2. The Divine glory is involved in the success of this prayer; 3. The character of God, the work of Christ, and the hope of heaven, should combine to induce us to make this prayer our own.

*Count Oxenstein.*—It is stated, by the celebrated William Penn, that Count Oxenstein, chancellor of Sweden, being visited, in his retreat from public business, by Commissioner Whitlock, ambassador from England to Queen Christiana, in the conclusion of their discourse, he said to the ambassador, "I have seen much and enjoyed much of this world; but I never knew how to live till now. I thank my good God, who has given me time to know Him, and likewise myself. All the comfort I have, and all the comfort I take, and which is more than the whole world can give, is the knowledge of God's love in my heart, and the reading in this blessed book," laying his hand on the Bible. "You are now," he continued, "in the prime of your age and vigour, and in great favour and business; but this will all leave you, and you will one day better understand and relish what I say to you: then you will find that there is more wisdom, truth, comfort, and

[a] Ps. xxxiii. 3, 5.

[b] Ps. lxxi. 17, 18, cxiv. 5, 6.

[c] Ps. xxii. 14.

"The symptoms of spiritual decline are like those which attend the decay of bodily health. It generally commences with loss of appetite and a disrelish for wholesome food, prayer, reading the Scriptures and devotional books. Whenever you perceive these symptoms, be alarmed; for your spiritual life is in danger. Apply immediately to the Great Physician for a cure."—*Dr. Payson.*

"The more faithfully I apply myself to the duties of the Lord's-day, the more happy and successful is my business during the week."—*Sir Matthew Hale.*

[c] *Cheever.*

pleasure, in retiring and turning your heart from the world, in the good Spirit of God, and in reading His sacred Word, than in all the courts and favours of princes."[d]

29—32. (29) **way of lying**, of every kind of error and deception, or strictly of "unfaithfulness" to God's law and covenant. God's way is "the way of truth." (30) **chosen**, indicating the set purpose of the heart. (31) **stuck**, in orig. same word as in *v.* 25 trans. "cleaveth." (32) **run**,[a] indicating more earnestness than the "walk" of *v.* 1. **enlarge my heart**, expand it with a sense of freedom and holy joy.

*Heart-enlargement* (*v.* 32).—I. There is a heart-relationship between God and man. II. Man's heart-enlargement is entirely of God. III. On-pressing obedience proceeds from the spiritual expansiveness which God alone produces by His operations within us.[b]

*The old negro's argument.*—When the celebrated Tennent was travelling in Virginia, he lodged one night at the house of a planter, who informed him that one of his slaves, a man upwards of seventy, who could neither read nor write, was yet eminently distinguished for his piety, and for his knowledge of the Scriptures. Having some curiosity to learn what evidence such a man could have of their Divine origin, he went out in the morning, alone, and without making himself known as a clergyman, entered into conversation with him on the subject. After starting some of the common objections of infidels against the authenticity of the Scriptures, in a way calculated to confound an ignorant man, he said to him, "When you cannot even read the Bible, nor examine the evidence for or against its truth, how can you know that it is the Word of God?" After reflecting a moment, the negro replied, "You ask me, sir, how I know that the Bible is the Word of God: I know it, by its effect upon my own heart."[c]

33—36. (33) **the end**, of my life. (34) **observe it**,[a] another word for keep it, or obey it. (35) **make me to go**, for with the inward purpose, we still need also inward strength, and renewed gracious Div. impulses. (36) **covetousness**, or robbery: possibly some special temptation had assailed the Psalmist.[b] Perhaps used in the more general sense of "sensuality,"[c] often accompanying idolatry.

*The wisdom of true piety* (*v.* 34).—A spiritual discernment differs essentially from the mere exercise of our intellectual powers. Show—I. How true wisdom will operate. 1. To keep His law; 2. To observe it with our whole hearts. II. Wherein its operation will approve itself to every reflecting mind. 1. It is consonant with right reason: 2. It is conducive to our best interests. Address those—(1) Who live in the allowed violation of any one commandment; (2) Who profess to be endued with true wisdom.[d]

*Delighting in the Word of God.*—Dr. Buchanan, in a conversation he had with a friend, a short time before his death, was describing the minute pains he had been taking with the proofs and revisions of the Syriac Testament, every page of which passed under his eye five times before it was finally sent to press. He said he had expected beforehand that this process would have proved irksome to him, but that every fresh perusal of the sacred page seemed to unveil new beauties. Here he stopped, and said

[a] 1 Cor. ix. 24.

[b] *W. R. Percival.*

"He that cometh shall never hunger, is he that eateth this bread that giveth life; and he that believeth shall never thirst, is he that drinketh; to let us see that eating Him, and drinking Him, coming to Him, and believing on Him, are all the same thing."—*Dr. Allestry.*

[c] *Cheever.*

The man who goes to church every Sunday, and yet trembles before chance, is a Christian only because Christ has claimed him—is not a Christian as having believed in Him.

[a] De. v. 32.

[b] "Why there is mention of this sin one cannot tell; poss. the afflicted writer had been tempted by bribes to act contrary to his principles."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

[c] So *Stanley.*

[d] *C. Simeon, M.A.*

It was the remark of Cowper that "the colour of our whole life is generally such as the three or four first years in which we are our own masters make it." A very important thought for those just starting in the race of life.

to his friend, as soon as he recovered himself, "I could not suppress the emotion I felt, as I recollected the delight it pleased God to afford me in the reading of His Word."

37—40. (37) **turn away**, or aid me to turn aside from.[a] **vanity**, the usual term for idols, and idolatry. (38) **stablish**, make firm. **who**, better, "which issues in Thy fear."[b] (39) **reproach**, of having sinned against Thee, and fallen fr. Thy commandments. (40) **in thy righteousness**, better, according to Thy righteousness, wh. surely leads to the answering of prayer.

*The vanities of this world an obstacle to spiritual progress* (*v.* 37).—We propose to show—I. The fascinating power of earthly vanities. 1. They captivate and enslave the minds of the generality; 2. They have great power over those who profess godliness. II. The way to escape their baneful influence. 1. We should set a guard over our senses; 2. We should cry earnestly to God for His effectual grace. Apply—(1) To the young; (2) To those who profess godliness.[c]

*Relapsing into sin* (*v.* 37).—St. Augustine tells of a young man who had been for some time under his own instruction. The youth had been extravagantly addicted to attendance on the Circensian games. An allusion to the impropriety of these amusements occurring one day in Augustine's expositions, he was convinced of his sinful propensity, and abandoned these pleasures. After some time he proceeded to Rome, and having been invited by his friends to come and see the shows of the gladiators, he declined. His friends rallied him, but still he would not come. They then took him by force to the amphitheatre; but the young man, still resolute and determined, would not suffer himself thus to be brought into bondage. They might compel his body, but could not compel his spirit; so he sat with closed eyes, that he should not be tempted by the scenes before him. Suddenly the whole house rang again with plaudits loud and long. Thereupon, as it were by an instinct, or being overcome by curiosity, he opened his eyes. The whole scene filled his mind with admiration. There he beheld the relative position of the gladiators: one bleeding on the dust of the arena, the other waving his uplifted hand in the joyful enthusiasm of a conqueror, and receiving the applause of every voice and hand. The young man became interested in the scene: he looked, and gazed, and shouted: he grew warm in his enthusiasm, became inflamed; his pulse beat high with feverish excitement, and he went away enamoured of the sport, and worse than his seducers; and afterwards inclined the feet of others to like sinful pleasures.

41—44. (41) **salvation**, needed as deliverance from the daily power of sin, and the forgiveness of daily failures. (42) **have wherewith**, even the assurance of Thy mercies to me. (43) **utterly**, or far off; *v.* 8. The word of truth is the assurance of God's faithfulness to His promises. (44) **ever and ever**, limited only by life.

*Conditions of spiritual freedom* (*v.* 44).—I. Deep trust is essential to perfect freedom. Love casteth out fear. II. Holy living is essential to emancipation. Liberty is loving service. Freedom to sin would be vilest slavery. III. Illumination is

*e* *Whitecross.*

*a* Job xxxi. 26, 27; Is. xxxiii. 15.

*b* "Stablish Thy word in Thy servant, that I may fear Thee." —*Pr. Bk. Vers.*

"Stablish Thy word, .... which tends to the fearing of Thee." —*So apparently LXX.*

*c* *C. Simeon, M.A.*

"Vice is a monster of so frightful mien, as to be hated, needs but to be seen; yet seen too oft, familiar with her face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace." —*Pope.* But *Dryden* says, "For truth has such a face and such a mien, as to be loved needs only to be seen."

"We never, in the whole course of our recollections, met with a Christian friend who bore upon his character every other evidence of the Spirit's influence who did not remember the Sabbath-day to keep it holy."—*Dr. Chalmers.*

It is related of Beza, one of the Reformers, that when he was old, and could not recollect the names of persons and things he had heard but a few minutes before, he could remember and repeat the Epistles of St.

Paul, which he had committed to memory when he was young.

*a LL.D. in Homilist.*

*b R. Baxter* (1650).

"Sunday, that day so tedious to the triflers of earth, so full of beautiful repose, of calmness and strength for the earnest and heavenly-minded." — *Maria J. M'Intosh.*

needful to perfect freedom. IV. The spirit of love is needful for full emancipation. Apply:—1. Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty; 2. Fear not: if this spirit of ours be in earnest, God is working in us.[a]

*The Divine government.*—You see here in the government of the world, that it is things unseen that are the instruments of rule, and motives of obedience. Even in worldly matters you will venture upon the greatest cost and pains for the things that you see not, nor ever saw. He that hath a journey to go to a place that he never saw, will not think that a sufficient reason to stay at home. Must the husbandman see the harvest before he sow his seed? Must the sick man feel that he hath health before he use the means to get it? You would take such conceits, in worldly matters, to be the symptoms of distraction. And will you cherish these where they are most pernicious? No thanks to any of you all to be godly, if heaven to be presently seen. God will have a meeter way of trial: you shall believe His promises if ever you will have the benefit.[b]

45—48. (45) **at liberty,** *Heb.* "in a broad place;" free from constraint and intimidation.[a] God's service is perfect freedom. (46) **before kings,** words suitable to Ezra or Nehemiah. "The viceroys of the Persian kings may be alluded to." (47) **delight myself,** as *v.* 16. (48) **hands . . lift up,** in the attitude of fervent supplication.[b]

*Boldness in religion* (*v.* 46).—We have the noble resolution of a great man in reference to the Bible: he resolves to speak of it—in the highest circles—with the greatest boldness. The reasons. I. It is a Divine system. II. It is a rational system. III. It is a powerful system. IV. It is a restorative system. V. It is a universal system. From this subject we infer respecting religion—1. Its intelligibility; 2. Its sociality; 3. Its equality.[c]

*Meditation in the Word of God* (*v.* 48).—The Rev. Legh Richmond, in one of his visits to the "Young Cottager," found her asleep with her finger lying on a Bible, which lay open before her, pointing at these words,—"Lord, remember me when Thou comest into Thy kingdom." Is this casual or designed? thought I. Either way it is remarkable. But in another moment I discovered that her finger was indeed an index to the thoughts of her heart. She half awoke from her dozing state, but not sufficiently so to perceive that any person was present, and said in a kind of whisper, "Lord, remember me—remember me—remember—remember a poor child;—Lord, remember me."—"I have led but a lonely life," said David Saunders ("the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain"), "and often have had but little to eat; but my Bible has been meat, drink, and company to me; and when want and trouble have come upon me, I don't know what I should have done, indeed, if I had not had the promises of this Book for my stay and support."

49—52. (49) **the word,** some special promise seems to be referred to. This promise had roused him to new courage and hope. (50) **comfort,**[a] Heb. *neehamah*, whence the name Nehemiah is derived. (51) **proud,** or those who scoff at me.[b] Comp. for connection of pride and irreligious scoffing, Pr. xxi. 24. (52) **judgments,** *v.* 7.[c] God's revealed law, wh. is ever true, and ever in force.

a "Where there is nothing to check or hinder freedom of action."—*Perowne.*

b Ps. xxviii. 2, lxiii. 5, cxxxiv. 2, cxli. 2.

c *Dr. Thomas.*

"Literature is the immortality of speech."—*Schlegel.*

"An apt quotation is as good as an original remark."—*Proverb.*

"Worthy books are not companions—they are solitudes; we lose ourselves in them, and all our cares."—*Bailey.*

"'Tis strange, but true; for truth is always strange; stranger than fiction."—*Byron.*

a Job vi. 10.

b Comp. Neh. iv. 4.

c "God's laws, righteous and true, rewarding the good, punishing the evil, the

*Comfort under persecution* (*vv.* 51, 52).—What David speaks of his own experience leads us to consider—I. The trials he endured. 1. He was held greatly in derision by his ungodly subjects; 2. And can we hope to escape similar trials? II. The graces he exercised. 1. Firmness: he allowed nothing to divert him from the path of duty; 2. We also should be firm. III. The consolations he enjoyed. 1. In the recollections of God's judgments; 2. The same sources of consolation are open to us. Learn—(1) What expectations to form; (2) What conduct to pursue; (3) What recompense to look for.[d]

"*Think of Thy servant*" (*v.* 49).—Josquin, a celebrated composer, was appointed master of the chapel to Louis XII. of France, who promised him a benefice, but, contrary to his usual custom, forgot him. Josquin, after suffering great inconvenience from the shortness of his majesty's memory, ventured, by a singular expedient, publicly to remind him of his promise, without giving offence. Being commanded to compose a motet for the chapel royal, he chose part of the 119th Psalm, beginning "Oh, think of Thy servant as concerning Thy word," which he set in so supplicating and exquisite a manner, that it was universally admired, particularly by the king, who was not only charmed with the music, but felt the force of the words so effectually, that he soon after granted his petition, by conferring on him the promised appointment.[e]

53—56. (53) horror, LXX. renders, *depression*.[a] Better, "burning indignation." (54) my songs,[b] giving such satisfaction and peace that they inspired songs; were the theme of songs. pilgrimage, or sojourning, as *v.* 9. "The phrase incates the present, as contrasted with the future world." (55) in the night, both the actual night, and the night-time of doubting and fear. (56) had, the word includes "had and still have as my possession."

*Songs on the march* (*v.* 54).—I. This world is to the Christian the house of his pilgrimage. 1. It is not his home; 2. While in it liable to change; 3. Will soon quit it. II. In the house of his pilgrimage the Christian has songs. They may be—1. Festive; 2. Social; 3. Patriotic; 4. Martial; 5. Plaintive. III. The Christian's songs in the house of his pilgrimage are drawn from the Bible. 1. Their matter; 2. Their music: melody in the heart. Apply:—(1) Be pilgrims; (2) Be cheerful pilgrims; (3) Prize the Bible; (4) We shall presently sing the new song.[c]

*Reading the Bible.*—A person in Birmingham, who lived in the neglect of the worship of God, and of reading the Bible, was on a Lord's-day sitting at the fire with his family. He said that he thought he would read a chapter in the Bible, not having read one for a long time. But, alas! he was disappointed; it was too late; for in the very act of reaching it from the shelf, he sank down and immediately expired.[d]

57—60. (57) thou, *etc.*, Heb. is *Jehovah* (is) *my portion*; or inheritance.[a] (58) favour,[b] Heb. *face*. Ps. xlv. 12. (59) thought on, seriously pondered. (60) made haste, the signs of hearty earnestness.

*The soul's portion* (*v.* 57).—As the portion of the soul God is—I. Ever-present. II. Accessible. III. Soul-satisfying. IV. Unchanging. V. Everlasting.[e]

recollection of these fills the mind of the Psalmist with consolation."—*Spk. Com.*

*d C. Simeon, M.A.*

"There are no songs comparable to the songs of Zion, no orations equal to those of the prophets, and no politics like those which the Scriptures teach."—*Milton.*

*e Percy Anec.*

"The most sublime spectacle in the world is a powerful mind vindicating truth in the presence of its foes, and a martyr calmly sealing his faith with his blood."—*Colton.*

*a* Terror.—*Calvin.* Sadness.—*Arab*, and *Syr.*

Allusion may be to the burning wind or simoom.

*b* "Delightful advertisements to me."—*Spk. Com.*

*c G. Brooks.*

Dr. Gouge used to read fifteen chapters every day; five in the morning, five after dinner, and five in the evening, before going to bed. Mr. Jeremiah Whittaker usually read all the Epistles in the Greek Testament twice every fortnight.

*d Whitecross.*

*a* Ps. xvi. 5.

*b* "*Challoth pānim*, lit. 'to stroke the face,' is an expression of caressing flattering entreaty."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c W. W. Whythe.* Thus we ought to believe, and watch with expectation for answers to our prayer. Do not say, "Lord, turn my darkness into light," and then go out with your candle as though you expected to find it dark. After asking the Lord to appear for you, expect Him to do so, for according to your faith so be it unto you.

*d Whitecross.* "Above all things, always speak the truth; your word must be your bond through life."—*Haliburton.*

*A well-kept Bible* (*v.* 59).—At a meeting of the Aberdeen Auxiliary Bible Society, the following pleasing anecdote was related by an eye-witness of the scene. "Last year," said he, "a vessel from Stockholm was driven upon our coast in a tremendous gale, and became a total wreck. Her condition was such that no human aid could possibly preserve the crew. In a short while after the vessel struck, she went to pieces. The persons on shore beheld with grief the awful state of those on board, but could render them no aid. They all perished except one lad; and he was driven by the waves upon a piece of the wreck, entwined among the ropes attached to the mast. Half-naked and half-drowned, he reached the shore. As soon as they rescued him, they saw a small parcel tied firmly round his waist with a handkerchief. Some thought it was his money; others, the ship's papers; and others said it was his watch. The handkerchief was unloosed, and to their surprise it was his Bible,—a Bible given to the lad's father by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Upon the blank leaf was a prayer written, that the Lord might make the present gift the means of saving his son's soul. Upon the other blank leaf was an account of how the Bible came into the father's hands, with expressions of gratitude to the Society from which he received it. To this was added a request to his son that he would make it the man of his counsel; and that he could not allow him to depart from home without giving him the best pledge of his love—a Bible; although that gift deprived the other parts of the family. The Bible bore evident marks of having been often read with tears."[d]

61—64. (61) bands, marg. *companies.* Better, "cords," or "snares."[a] (62) at midnight, said to show his constant thought of God. (63) a companion, *i.e.* I choose such, and only such, for companions. (64) earth is full,[b] so the man whose eyes and heart are opened can find occasion to praise God wherever he may look.

*Spring* (*v.* 64).—The text leads us to consider God's bountihood in nature. I. It fills the earth. II. It entails moral obligation. It shows the duty of a Divinely regulated life: and this implies two things. 1. A knowledge of the Divine statutes; and, 2. An instruction in them—"teach me." We must have God to interpret them to the mind and to the heart.[c]

*Textual knowledge of the Bible.*—It is related of the late Rev. Dr. Balmer that, even when a child, he was punctual in his morning and evening devotions; unequalled in getting hymns and passages of Scripture by heart; and restless till he knew where to find the narrative or text he was anxious to peruse or to commit to memory. In regard to this last particular, it is remembered that, though it would be difficult to say which of his parents was best acquainted with the Scriptures, Robert early learned that he could obtain the most precise information from his father. He would apply to him accordingly; and when he replied, "Ask your mother, she knows as well as I." "Aye," the boy answered, "but she'll tell me it's in one of the little prophets, and you tell me chapter and verse."[d]

65—68. (65) dealt well, in the past times. (66) good judgment,[a] better, wise and right discernment. believed, *etc.*, God's commandments being the only sources of wisdom and

*a* Illus. in Ne. vi. 2—14.

*b* Ps. xxxiii. 5.

*c Dr. Thomas.* It has been estimated that only 25,000,000 of Bibles were published from the discovery of the art of printing to the year 1806; that since that time not 10,000,000 have been issued; and at the present rate of issue, it must be 500 years before all the families of the earth can possess a copy.

*d Whitecross.* "Truth is the best thing that man may kepe."—*Chaucer.*

*a* Comp. Paul's prayer for the Philippians. Ph. i. 9.

Divine instruction. (67) before . . afflicted, evidently referring to some recent special season of suffering. (68) good, in sense of "kind."

*A servant's story* (*v.* 65).—I. Although He knew my faults, He engaged me. II. Although I am so far beneath Him, yet He familiarly teaches me. III. Although I am always ailing, He is very kind to me in my afflictions. IV. Although I am one of the meanest of His servants, He permits me to feast at His own table. V. Although I do little work, He will pay me good wages. VI. Although I am to have such great wages, I have very many perquisites. VII. Although my Master is all this to me,—can you believe it?—I murmur and repine at him if He cross me in anything. Apply:—1. Does not the word "servant" sound like a misnomer?—"not servants, . . . but I have called you friends;" 2. Though he call me "friend," I shall never cease to call Him "Master."[b]

*The uses of affliction* (*v.* 67).—Two painters were employed to fresco the walls of a magnificent cathedral. Both stood on a rude scaffolding constructed for the purpose, some distance from the floor. One, so intent upon his work, forgetting where he was, stepped back slowly, surveying critically the work of his pencil, until he had neared the edge of the plank on which he stood. At this moment his companion, just perceiving his danger, seized a wet brush, flung it against the wall, spattering the picture with unsightly blotches of colouring. The painter flew forward, and turned upon his friend with fierce upbraidings, till made aware of the danger he had escaped; then, with tears of gratitude, he blessed the hand that saved him. Just so, sometimes we get so absorbed with the pictures of the world, unconscious of our peril, when God in mercy dashes out the beautiful images, and draws us, at the time we are complaining of His dealings, into His outstretched arms of love.[c]

69—72. (69) proud, *vv.* 51, 61. forged, or patched up.[a] (70) fat as grease, dull and brutal.[b] "A figure of obduracy and insensibility." (71) good, *etc.*, as *v.* 67. (72) law . . mouth,[c] *i.e.* which Thou speakest.

*God's meaning in men's suffering* (*v.* 71).—I. The different forms under which men are called to endure the discipline of affliction. II. Consider how and why, in accordance with the experience of David, it is good to be afflicted; or, in other words, to trace some of the ways in which it does men good to be afflicted. III. Let us consider the statutes of God that are learned by affliction.[d]

*Benefits of suffering* (*v.* 71).—"I was called upon," says the Rev. Mr. Trefit, an American minister, "some years ago, to visit an individual, a part of whose face had been eaten away by a most loathsome cancer. Fixing my eyes on this man in his agony, I said, 'Supposing that Almighty God were to give you your choice, whether would you prefer your cancer, your pain, and your sufferings, with a certainty of death before you, but of immortality hereafter; or health, prosperity, long life in the world, and the risk of losing your immortal soul?' 'Ah, sir!' said the man, 'give me the cancer, the pain, the Bible, the hope of heaven; and others may take the world, long life, and prosperity!'"[e]

"That fine taste and delicate feeling wh. are like a new sense."—*Perowne.*

*b Stems and Twigs.*

"There is truth in the teaching that purification comes through sorrow, and self-sacrifice, and fiery trial. It is no mere Puritanic notion that the pathway to the Delectable Mountains, of which we all get longing glimpses, leads through the Valley of Humiliation and through the Valley of the Shadow of Death."—*R. G White.*

*c Teachers' Treas.*

"'Tween truth and fact a world-wide difference lies; earth is a fact, but heaven, O heaven! is truth."—*Bailey.*

*a* "Have sewn together a lie; as they did against Nehemiah. Ne. vi. 6–13."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* See the fig. illus. in Ps. xvii. 9, lxxiii. 6; Is. vi. 10.

*c* Ps. xix. 10; Pr. viii. 11.

*d H. T. Cheever.*

"Afflictions are blessings to us when we can bless God for afflictions. Suffering has kept many from sinning. God had one Son without sin, but He never had any without sorrow. Fiery trials make golden Christians; sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotion."—*Dyer.*

*e Whitecross.*

a Ps. c. 3, cxxxvii. 8.
b Ps. xxxiv. 2, lvi. 16.
c *Dr. Thomas.* "Men's works have an age, like themselves; and though they outlive their authors, yet have they a stint and period to their duration. This only (the Bible) is a work too hard for the teeth of time, and cannot perish."—*Sir Thomas Browne.* Tertullian, after his conversion, was engaged day and night in reading the Scriptures, and got much of them by heart.
a *Cheever.*
"Truth is so great a perfection as to have led Pythagoras to say, that if God were to render Himself visible to men, He would choose light for His body, and truth for His soul."—*Palmer.*

a "Shame and discomfiture seem the fitting recompense of the proud, who see, by the providence of God, their plans fail, and prosperity, instead of calamity, result to him whom they persecute."—*Spk. Com.*
Gregory Lopez, a Spanish monk in Mexico, in the sixteenth century, committed to memory both the Old and New Testaments in the short space of four years, spending four hours a day in memorising them.

73, 74. (73) fashioned me,[a] better, "Thy hands have cunningly made me." (74) see me, as a recovered man, sanctified by affliction.[b]

*The right attitude of man in relation to God* (*v.* 73).—Here we have man in a threefold attitude. I. Recognising God as the author of his existence. II. Looking to God as the educator of his spirit. III. Imploring God as the perfecter of his being.[c]

*Longing for the word.*—President Edwards could say of his early, and indeed of his whole religious life, "I had vehement longings of soul after God and Christ, and after more holiness, wherewith my heart seemed to be full and ready to break; which often brought to my mind the words of the Psalmist, "My soul breaketh for the longing that it hath." One of his well-known resolutions reads thus: "Resolved, when I find those 'groanings which cannot be uttered,' of which the Apostle speaks, and those 'breakings of the soul for the longing it hath,' of which the Psalmist speaks, that I will promote them to the utmost of my power, and that I will not be weary of earnestly endeavouring to vent my desires, nor of the repetitions of such earnestness."

75–77. (75) faithfulness, that will not let failings pass into sins, but will wisely and mercifully chastise and correct. (76) merciful kindness, Ps. cxvii. 2. (77) live, prolong that restored health so graciously given.

*The surgeon's reply.*—M. Boudon, an eminent surgeon, was one day sent for by the Cardinal Du Bois, Prime Minister of France, to perform a very serious operation upon him. The cardinal, on seeing him enter the room, said to him, "You must not expect to treat me in the same rough manner as you treat your poor miserable wretches at your hospital of the Hôtel Dieu." "My lord," replied M. Boudon with great dignity, "every one of those miserable wretches, as your eminence is pleased to call them, is a prime minister in my eyes."[a]

78–80. (78) dealt perversely,[a] oppressing unjustly, and without cause. (79) turn unto me, for companionship, and that I may establish them in their confidence in God. (80) sound, comp. r. 2; sincerity, wholeness, is a great Old Test. idea.

*Trust in God in affliction.*—A little active girl, in Norfolk, ten years old, had for some weeks been nursing, with affectionate watchfulness, a sick sister, whom she expected to die; her mother and another sister being also great invalids. She began to feel quite worn out; and leaving her cottage one morning, in order to fetch medicine, she went along her way with a heavy heart, and crying very much. But, when reaching Cromer, she heard some one speak of two poor criminals about to be executed. Her mind immediately turned to the contrast between the feelings of the friends of these poor wretches and hers for her sister Lizzy; who, she felt, must be in the hands of God: and if she died, it must be His will, and for good reasons. She felt it was wrong in her to encourage sorrow; therefore, hastening on her business, she resolved to do all she could for the comfort of Lizzy, and leave the event to God. Whilst returning home across the fields, she directed her mind to think of what she had learned of Scripture. A verse in the 119th Psalm came to her

recollection with great force: "I know, O Lord, that Thy judgments are right, and that Thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me." She felt so cheered by this text, that her mother was quite struck by her briskness and change of spirits on her return; and, on asking her the cause, learned from her the reasoning of her mind, and the effect of this verse of Scripture. The little girl continued active, day and night, in her attendance; and had the happiness, after some time, of seeing her sister recover. Often, too, when the mother's heart was low, she would refer to some words of comfort from the Bible, and repeat them, with a confidence in the peace and rest they would afford in time of trouble.[b]

81—84. (81) **fainteth**, with long and eager watching, Ps. lxxxiv. 2. (82) **eyes fail**, as those of one weary with watching. (83) **bottle in the smoke**, a wine-skin shrivelled and blackened by the smoke in wh. it hangs.[a] The effect of smoke on the exterior of a wine-skin resembles the withering, darkening influences of grief. (84) **many . . days**, the days of suffering and waiting.

*The uses of the Bible.*—The Word doth not only profit a man for the present while he heareth it, but it is many times effectual afterwards. And therefore it is called long-lasting food, the strength wherof abideth with a man all his life. The remembrance of the Word is a notable means to prevent the falling into sin, as well as to recover a man that is fallen. As a man that hath a lanthorn carried before him, may keep himself from falling in a dark night; so, if a man always carry the Word of God before him, it will preserve him from falling into sin. "How sweet are Thy words unto my mouth, therefore I hate every false way."[b]

85—88. (85) **digged pits**, such as were dug to ensnare animals.[a] **not . . law**, *i.e.* they act in defiance of Thy law. (86) **faithful**, Heb. *faithfulness*. (87) **almost consumed**, their plottings were nearly successful. (88) **quicken me**, as *v.* 25.

*The Bible a wonderful book.*—There are wondrous things in the Word of God. That fallen man should be recovered is a wondrous thing; that a holy God should be reconciled to sinful man is a wondrous thing; that the Son of God should take upon Him the nature of man, and God be manifested in the flesh, and a believer justified by the righteousness of another, these are wondrous things. But there is darkness upon our minds, and a veil over our eyes, and the Scripture is a clasped closed book, that we cannot savingly understand these wonderful things, except the Spirit of God take away the veil, and remove our ignorance, and enlighten our minds; and this wisdom is to be sought from God by fervent prayer.[b]

89—92. (89) **in heaven**, indicating its everlasting, unchanging character.[a] Heaven is the image of unchangeableness. (90) **all generations**, lit. *to generation and generation*. (91) **all**, or all things, the whole universe. (92) **have perished**, by giving way to despair, and so forsaking God.[b]

*The Word of God a pillow.*—A missionary in New Zealand, while visiting the sick, went to the hut of a poor cripple. He found him with a New Testament lying by his side, and asked if he could read. He replied that he could. He was asked, "How

"It is certain that in the main, the vessels which the Spirit used were sanctified vessels. 'Holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.' But as they were all corrupt at first, so there were diversities in the operation whereby they were called and qualified for their work."—*Dr. Arnot.*

*b R. T. S.*

*a* "As wine-skin in the smoke, my heart is sere and dried."—*Keble.* "Wine in Asia is stored in upper chambers, underneath wh. large fires are commonly burning. The warmth communicates to it, quickly, properties and excellences, which a long time only could otherwise impart."—*Galen*, thro' *Spk. Com.*

*b C. Richardson* (1612).

*a* Ex. xxi. 33; 2 Sa. xxiii. 20; Je. xviii. 20, 22.

"God has given us four books: the book of grace, the book of nature, the book of the world, and the book of providence. Every occurrence is a leaf in one of these books; it does not become us to be negligent in the use of any of them."—*Cecil.*

*b T. Doolittle* (1670).

*a* Ps. lxxxix 2.

*b* "'If my delight had not been in Thy law, so excellent and eternal, I should have perished long ago in my misery.' A verse of price ines-

timable.'"—*Spk. Com.*

"I have somewhere seen it observed, that we should make the same use of a book that the bee does of a flower; she steals sweets from it, but does not injure it."—*Colton.*

*c Youth's Daystar.*

*a* "To every finite thing there is an end or limit, but Thy commandments have no end or limit to their perfection."—*Rashi.*

"Of everything that is striven after and wrought out I have seen an end."—*Jewish Targum.*

"There is no human thing so perfect but that something is wanting to it; its limits are narrow, whereas God's law is of infinite breadth."—*Fausset.*

*b W. W. Whythe.*

"When God saith to the soul, 'I am thine,' it is enough; He cannot say more; He will be His people's God as long as He is God."—*Old Author.*

v. 96. *Abp. Leighton*, iii. 326; *Abp. Tillotson*, vi. 185; *J. Foster*, i. 324; *Dr. Stanley, Ser. in East.* 123.

"Give to the sacred pages a fair examination; try them as to their general scope and tendency—the character, the disposition, the views of those who did you learn to read?" as he had never attended a school. He said, "I used to creep about, and after raking the rubbish thrown out of my neighbours' houses, pick up all the bits of printed paper I could find. Sometimes I got half a leaf of a New Testament, and sometimes a bit of a leaf of the Prayer Book. These pieces, which I got from time to time, I used to sew together. Then, to learn to read, I pointed to a word, and asked my brother to tell me its meaning. This I often did, till at last I could manage to read a whole verse, and then a chapter. Now I can read any chapter." The missionary then asked, "Do you esteem the Word of God?" He replied, in his expressive language, "It is my pillow."*c*

93—96. (93) I will never, a firm and earnest resolve, but made in full dependence on Divine quickening. (94) thine, by full and hearty devotement of myself to Thee. Full trust in God is a plea on which we may urge the bestowment of His saving grace on us. (95) waited, watching for the opportunity of a slip, of wh. they might take advantage. (96) end .. perfection, some rend. "I have seen an end to the whole range of things."*a* broad, Job xi. 7—9.

*Divine relationship* (*v.* 94).—I. The Christian's relationship to God. He is God's—1. By purchase; 2. By conquest; 3. By adoption; 4. By dedication; 5. By likeness. II. His prayer. 1. Save me from sin; 2. From carelessness; 3. From my enemies; 4. From despondency. III. The reasons he assigns. I have sought to—1. Read them; 2. Understand them; 3. To be governed by them.*b*

*The Bible Psalm.*—This Psalm is a Bible upon the Bible. It is the longest chapter in the volume, numbering one hundred and seventy-six verses; more than are found in the Book of Ruth or Esther, in the Song of Solomon or the Lamentations of Jeremiah, or most of the minor prophets; more than in the Epistle to the Galatians or the Ephesians; indeed, more than in two-thirds of the books composing the New Testament. It is the Holy Spirit's testimonial to His own wonderful work. If in the great temple of Revelation, where Moses and all the Prophets give oracles, where Evangelists rehearse their narratives, where Apostles discourse, and where are mighty harpers harping with their harps, one would behold an appropriate inscription, he is bidden to look round upon the vast fabric itself. A visitor to the cathedral of Strasburg, after surveying the gigantic mass from without,—the eye lingering long on its wonderful spire, the highest in the world,—enters the edifice; and, looking round with admiration, he observes just above the Gothic border that runs along the wall, a figure of the architect, Erwin of Steinbach, carved by himself. There he has stood for centuries, apparently in pleased contemplation of his achievement. Such in the majestic temple of revealed truth stands this Psalm; it is the Divine Author's own image; His special and enduring memorial of Himself and of His masterpiece.—*Independence of the Bible.*—In relation to other books the Bible occupies a peculiar and solitary position. It is independent of all others: it imitates no other book; it copies none: it hardly alludes to any other, whether in praise or blame; and this is nearly as true of its latter portions, when books were common, as of its earlier, when books were scarce. It proves, thus, its originality and power. Mont Blanc does not measure

himself with Jura; does not name her, nor speak, save when in thunder he talks to her of God. Then only, too, does she

"Answer from her misty shroud
Back to the joyous Alps."

John never speaks of Plato, nor Paul of Demosthenes, nor Jesus of any writer, save Moses and the Prophets. In those great heights you feel blowing round your temples, and stirring your hair, the free, original, ancient breath of the upper world, unconventional, unmixed, and irresistible as the mountain tempest. It is a book unlike all others—the points of difference being these among many others:—There is a certain grand unconsciousness, as in Niagara, speaking now in the same tone to the tourists of a world, as when she spoke to the empty wilderness and the silent sun; and as in the Himalayan Hills, which cast the same look of still sovereignty over an India unpeopled after the deluge, as over an India the hive of sweltering nations.[c]

97—100. (97) **all the day,**[a] a strong fig. for "constantly." (98) **wiser,** bec. he has the "practical wisdom wh. consists in the fear of the Lord, and leads him to eschew all evil."[b] **they,** Heb. *it*. The commandments of God being regarded as one whole. (99) **thy testimonies,** they are the teachings of One greater than all human teachers, so in his teachings the Psalmist feels that he surpasses all earthly masters. (100) **ancients,**[c] aged men, who are wise by the fruitage of long experience.

*Love to God's law* (*v.* 97).—I. God's people have a great love for the Word of God. 1. The Word of God deserves this love; 2. The saints readily yield this love to the Word. II. They that love the Word will be meditating therein continually. 1. Love causeth this; 2. Meditation cherisheth love.[d]

*How to study the Bible* (*v.* 99).—The telescope, we know, brings within the sphere of our own vision much that would be undiscoverable by the naked eye; but we must not the less employ our eyes in making use of it, and we must watch and calculate the motions, and reason on the appearances of the heavenly bodies, which are visible only through the telescope, with the same care we employ in respect of those seen by the naked eye. And an analogous procedure is requisite if we would derive the intended benefit from the pages of inspiration, which were designed not to save us the trouble of inquiring and reflecting, but to enable us on some points to inquire and reflect to better purpose; not to supersede the use of our reason, but to supply its deficiencies.[e]—*The Bible.*—The Bible is a universal boon to mankind; and we who believe in its inspiration should do our utmost to give it extension and effect. It is not written for any particular nation or age. It does not depend for its authority or its vouchers upon any church or all churches. It stands upon its own peculiar evidences; and no more requires the indorsement of the Church to make it current, than the sun requires the authority of the astronomers to warrant our belief in its existence, or our perception of its light and heat. The Bible belongs to the world, like the air, the ocean, the rivers, and the fountains of water. It is a common light, a common blessing, the imperishable heirloom of humanity: our whole inheritance lies here. No party can claim any special property in it; none has any right to monopolise it, or dogmatise upon its contents. It adequately

wrote them; try them with careful meditation and prayer, and you will find your Bible to be a jewel indeed,—in this respect, as well as others, that the more it is worn, the brighter it will shine."—*Bowden.*

Zuinglius wrote out St. Paul's Epistles, and committed them to memory.

*c C. Gilfillan.*

*a* Ps. i. 2, 3; 1 Ti. iv. 15.

*b Perowne.*

Comp. Ps. cxix. 99, 100.

*c* Job xxxii. 8, 9.

*d Dr. Manton.*

*v.* 97. *Dr. W. Bates*, iii. 113; *Dr. J. Foster*, ii. 31.

*vv.* 99, 100. *J. Keble*, i. 24.

*e Abp. Whately.*

"The Scriptures are the mysteries of God; let us not be curious; let us not seek to know more than God hath revealed by them. They are the sea of God; let us take heed we be not drowned in them. They are the fire of God; let us take comfort by their heat, and warily take heed they burn us not. They that gaze over-hardly upon the sun take blemish in their eyesight."—*Jewel.*

The celebrated Witsius was able to recite almost

any passage of Scripture, in its proper language, together with its context, and the criticisms of the best commentators.

"Truth is the offspring of unbroken meditations, and of thoughts often revised and corrected."—*Wollaston.*

*f Redford.*

*a* Is. i. 16, 17; He. xii. 3, 4.

"Avoidance of sinful courses is both the effect and means of increasing in Divine knowledge."—*Fausset.*

*b* "Thou, and not man whose teaching is vain; Thou, whose teaching, as Thyself, is indescribably excellent."—*Spk. Com.*

*c* Comp. Job xxiii. 12.

"The Bible resembles an extensive and highly cultivated flower garden, where there is a vast variety and profusion of fruits and flowers, some of which are more essential or more splendid than others; but there is not a blade suffered to grow in it which has not its use and beauty in the system. Salvation for sinners is the grand truth presented everywhere, and in all points of light; but the pure in heart sees a thousand traits of the Divine character, of himself, and of the world: some striking and bold vindicates its own claims by the light, and truth, and love, which never forsake it. Happily it has long since achieved for itself an emancipation from the priestcraft which had restricted its circulation, and dictated its import to the world. It has since been gradually diffusing its light, and advancing towards that universal dissemination which its own prophecies foreshow as certain, and the auguries of these times indicate as near. Great and auspicious events to mankind seem to be travailing for their birth-hour. But whatever character they may give to the eras which have yet to revolve, our own times have received their appropriate stamp; they can hardly miss the designation of the Bible Age. Happy will it prove for ourselves, if we are found as diligent in studying the contents of the Book, as we have been zealous in promoting its circulation.*f*

101—104. (101) refrained . . way, man's watchfulness of himself, and of his conduct, ought always to match the bestowments of God's grace and help to him.*a* (102) thou hast taught, emphasis is laid on Thou; "even Thou, the all-wise God."*b* (103) sweet, comp. Ps. xix. 10. taste, Heb. *palate*, as the seat of the sense of taste.*c* honey, first mentioned in Ge. xliii. 11. (104) understanding, in sense of discrimination bet. good and evil. false way, *v.* 29.

*Joy at having the Word of God.*—At a missionary prayer meeting in Mangaia, after the whole Bible had been received in their own language, an aged disciple, in rising to address the people from Job v. 17—19, said:—"I have often spoken to you from a text out of other parts of the Bible which we had; but this is the first time we have seen the Book of Job in our own language. It is a new book to us. When I received my Bible, I never slept until I had finished this new Book of Job. I read it all. Oh, what joy I felt in the wonderful life of this good man! Let us read the whole book. Let us go to the missionary, by day and by night, and inquire into the meaning of the new parts which we have not read. Let us be at his door when he rises, let us stop him when we meet him, that he may tell us of these new books." And lifting his new Bible before the congregation, with the excited energy of a feeble old man, he said, "My brethren and sisters, this is my resolve. The dust shall never cover my new Bible; the moths shall never eat it; the mildew shall never rot it! My light! my joy!"—*Divinity of the Bible.*—I will briefly show, by one illustration, the three kinds of evidence by which we may prove to a Roman Catholic that the Bible is the Word of God. Suppose an individual has been an invalid, and after six weeks' illness has been restored to perfect health and strength by means of a tonic prescribed by some physician: suppose the tonic to be port wine. A stranger comes to this recovered man and says, "It is not port wine which you have been taking, it is merely water from the ditch." What would be his reply? He might say, "I will convince you from three distinct sources that that which I am taking is port wine." First, he brings the wine-merchant; and the wine-merchant states that he saw the grapes in the vineyard, he saw them prepared in the wine-press, he saw the wine put into the cask, drawn off into bottles, placed in the chamber of the invalid. This is external evidence. He next calls the chemist, and the chemist states that he has subjected the wine to the usual and

appropriate tests, and he is sure it is port wine. That is internal evidence. But the third witness is the recovered patient; and he says, "I can add the experimental to these evidences; I was reduced to the verge of the grave by debility, and this has raised me up, renewed my vigour, imparted strength to my constitution; I am persuaded that it is not water, but an efficacious tonic that I have taken." It is so with this Book. All three evidences rest on it as the glory on the mercy-seat; but to a Christian taught by the Spirit of God, his heartfelt experience is the strongest evidence. "I have felt the glorious Gospel in the inmost recesses of my heart," and "I know in whom I have believed;" no sophistries or subtleties of men can disprove this to be "the wisdom of God, and the grace of God unto salvation." [d]

—others cast as it were into the shade, and designed to be searched for and examined; some direct, others by way of intimation or inference."—*Cecil.*

*d Dr. J. Cumming.*

105. **lamp,**[a] marg. *candle.* With reference to the perils of travelling in the darkness and the night. The lamp, or lantern, was held low, so as to throw its light on the steps to be taken. **light . . path,** or a sun by day.

*The Bible the lamp of God* (*v.* 105).—I. In the path of duty: precipices; pitfalls; perils. Give examples. II. In the night of sorrow: sickness, adversity, spiritual darkness. III. To the throne of grace: pillar of fire: golden candlestick: perpetual lamp; communion with God. IV. Through the valley of the shadow of death. V. To heaven. Not reason or conscience, but the Word of God as applied by the Holy Spirit. This lamp—1. A test of faith; 2. A test of practice.[b]

*Follow the light.*—"When a boy," said a teacher in his address, a short time since, to his scholars, "I attended a Sunday school which was situated in the centre of a dark, muddy street, which was never lighted nor swept; and as we attended in the evening for instruction as well as in the daytime, it was with difficulty that the teachers could make their way through the filth, which was often piled in the road, without a light. The duty of walking before my instructors with a lantern was entrusted to me, and was one of which I was not a little proud. I carried the light as close as possible to the ground, in order that those who followed might see where to place their feet, and thus escape pollution. On one occasion, I remember, a teacher neglected to follow the light, but crossed the road, thinking that it was smoother on the other side, and presently he stepped into a pile of filth, which filled his boots, and caused him much annoyance. 'Ah!' said our old superintendent, 'that is the consequence of not following the light. What is the use of a light, if your footsteps are not directed by it?' I have never forgotten this remark; and it has been worth more than gold to me. Whenever I behold the light of God's truth, while I am thankful for that light, I do not forget that it will be of no value to me unless I follow it. My every footstep must be guided by it; and should I attempt to go into another path, because it is a little smoother, but to which God's Word does not lead me, I shall be certain to step into the filth of sin, and occasion myself many sorrows. It is only when we follow the light that we can say, 'Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.'"

*a* "Reference prob. is to the lamps and torches carried at night before an Eastern caravan."—*Fausset.*

"The way here below is a way through darkness, and leads close past abysses; in this danger of falling, and of going astray, the Word of God is a lamp to his feet, *i.e.* to his course, and a light to his path (Pr. vi. 23); his lamp or torch, and his sun."—*Delitzsch.*

"Unless God's Word illumine the way, the whole life of men is wrapped in darkness and mist, so that they cannot but miserably stray."—*Calvin.*

*b G. Brooks.*

*v.* 105. *J. R. Pitman,* 529; *H. Stebbing,* iii. 243; *G. J. Zollikoffer,* ii. 167; *C. Davy,* i. 8

106—108. (106) **sworn,** made solemn resolve, and publicly announced it. (107) **very much,**[a] the recurring reference to his present condition of affliction explains his earnest wrestling

*a* Ps. lxxi. 20; Ro. v. 3—5.

to keep hold of his faith in God. (108) **freewill offerings,**[b] presented as sacrifice of gratitude, beyond any requirements of the ceremonial law.

*Psalm cxix.*—In the German Psalters it is styled, probably on account of its alphabetical character, *Der Christen Goldenes, A, B, C.*—the Golden Alphabet of Christians; but it is also an advanced lesson for mature believers. We have here a sacred acrostic. One reason for such a method probably was to aid the memory. In conformity with that design, Philip Henry used to give this advice to his children: "Take a verse of Psalm one hundred and nineteen every morning to meditate upon, and so go over the Psalm twice a year, and that will bring you to be in love with all the rest of the Scriptures." Agreeably to that recommendation, we find his godly daughter, Mrs. Savage, writing thus in her diary (1687-8, March 9). "Friday morning: I have been of late taking some pains to learn by heart Psalm one hundred and nineteen, and have made some progress therein."

**109—112.** (109) **in my hand,** a Heb. fig. for extreme peril.[a] (110) **laid a snare,** a peril to wh. the Psalmist refers more than once in the course of the Ps. *See vv.* 23, 51, 61, 69, 85, 95, etc. (111) **for ever,**[b] or my permanent heritage. (112) **inclined my heart,** urged it with all holy resolves and persuasions.

*Divine testimonies* (*v.* 110).—I. The title here given to the Bible. 1. It is descriptive of its Author; 2. It is descriptive of its form. II. The terms in which the Christian's interest in the Bible is asserted. 1. He accepts it; 2. He accepts it as his patrimony; 3. He accepts it irreversibly. III. The reason of the Christian's preference of the Bible. 1. It is rational joy: 2. It is pure joy; 3. It is a satisfying joy. Apply:—(1) The superiority of the Christian's choice; (2) The sufficiency of his reason for it.[c]

*Delineation of godliness.*—"I know of no part of the Holy Scriptures where the nature and evidences of true and sincere godliness are so fully and largely insisted on and delineated, as in the one hundred and nineteenth Psalm. The Psalmist declares his design in the first verses of the Psalm, keeps his eye on it all along, and pursues it to the end. The excellency of holiness is represented as the immediate object of a spiritual taste and delight. God's law—that grand expression and emanation of the holiness of God's nature, and prescription of holiness to the creature—is all along represented as the great object of the love, the complaisance, and the rejoicing of the gracious nature which prizes God's commandments above gold, yea, the finest gold, and to which they are sweeter than honey and the honeycomb."[d]

**113—115.** (113) **vain thoughts,** better, "waverers I hate."[a] "Doubters, sceptics, double-minded men." (114) **hiding place,** Ps. cxliii. 9. **shield,** Ge. xv. 1. (115) **depart,** *etc.*, comp. Matt. vii. 23. The Psalmist here means, "Go away, it is quite useless to tempt me."

*Hating vain thoughts* (*v.* 113).—I. Thoughts, though little things, are important. II. What are vain thoughts? 1. Empty—thoughts that lead to nothing good; 2. Proud; 3. Wicked,

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b "His impulsive confessions and supplications."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"This *v.* is a fit petition with wh. to commence any service of prayer and praise to God."—*Canon Hawkins.*

De. xvi. 10; He. xiii. 15.

*v.* 106. *Abp. Tenison; J. Burroughs,* 197; *D. Mace,* 328; *Dr. A. Gerard,* i. 427; *Dr. D. Cresswell,* 243.

a Comp. Ju. xii. 3; 1 Sa. xix. 5, xxviii. 21; Job xiii. 14.

"The image is taken fr. a traveller carrying precious jewels in his hand through dangerous paths; or fr. soldiers, who carry their lives in their hands in this sense, that their lives depend upon their valour in fight."—*Spk. Com.*

b "God's law is an everlasting possession, more truly so than the land of Canaan itself, wh. was given to Israel for an everlasting heritage."—*Perowne.*

c *G. Brooks.*

*v.* 3. *R. Baxter,* xviii. 91; *R. Holdsworth,* 283; *J. W. Cunningham,* i. 308.

d *Pres. Edwards.*

a Heb. *sēiph,* one who is wavering or inconstant, one whose heart is not wholly with God.

Comp. 1 Ki. xviii. 21; Ja. i. 6.

*v.* 113. *T. Dorrington,* i. 22; *C.*

III. How a Christian should feel about vain thoughts. 1. Keep the heart with watchfulness and prayer; 2. Get the heart filled with good thoughts.[b]

*Vain thoughts.*—Evil thoughts are so sinful, that as they are most like the devil's sins, so they render us most like the devil in sinning. Evil thoughts are called by some the firstborn of the devil: they have compared them to the viper's brood, which eat and destroy their own mother; to burning coals, or fire carried in the bosom, which quickly scorch, and will at last consume him that carrieth them; as also to the little ones of Babylon (spoken of Ps. cxxxvii. 9) which 'tis our happiness to take and dash against the stones. These evil thoughts are indeed worse than those idols put into a secret place, the makers whereof the Lord pronounceth cursed (Deut. xxvii. 15). Evil thoughts, like idols, are molten and graven, formed and fashioned in the heart, and then laid up or put into that secret place; there are the chambers of this imagery. Evil thoughts, as they are very sinful, and in some cases more sinful than other sins, so in all cases they are more dangerous than other sins. And that upon a twofold ground: first, the multiplicity of them; many flies and grasshoppers (small creatures) spoiled Egypt, a great kingdom; many lice ate up and destroyed Herod, a great king; many twine threads will make a cord big enough to bind the strongest giant, yea, a cable big enough to hold the greatest ship; a huge multitude of little sands will endanger a vessel at sea as much as the mightiest rock. While we consider what multitudes, what myriads of evil thoughts are moving in us, or passing through us, how should we tremble at the danger! And yet there is a second thing considerable in evil thoughts, which endangers us more than the multitude of them, and that is our insensibleness of them. We quickly take notice of, and possibly are startled at, evil words, or evil acts, but as for evil thoughts they swarm in us, and yet scarce fall under any observation, much less are they taken into any solemn or serious examination. Now, how dangerous it is to have many unseen enemies near about us every man can conclude. Yet such are our evil thoughts.

116—120. (116) may live, comp. *v.* 77. (117) hold thou, his firm resolves were quite consistent with an entire leaning on God for the necessary strength. (118) trodden down, the figure of "conquered and humbled." "Thou hast cast off, and made no account."[a] falsehood, self-deception.[b] (119) puttest, *etc.*, out of sight. like dross,[c] by the fire of Thy judgment.[d] (120) trembleth, or *shuddereth.*[e]

*Our safety* (*v.* 117).—It is with us as it was with the Apostle Peter when he would needs walk upon the water to go to Christ: he thought he could have done as his Master did; but as soon as ever he set his foot out of the ship, he was ready to sink, had not Christ caught him by the hand and held him up. In like manner, unless the Lord reach out the hand of His grace to support us, we cannot but fall. As a staff in a man's hand, so long as he holdeth it, it stands; but if he take away his hand, it falleth to the ground: so we can stand by ourselves, no longer than the Lord stayeth us. The children of God are "led by the Spirit of God." The Lord, knowing our weakness, in mercy sendeth His Holy Spirit, which leadeth us by the hand like little children.[f]

*Craig*, ii. 416; *J. Grose*, i. 64; *S. Lavington*, i. 110; *F. Arnold*, 240.

*b J. Vaughan, M.A.*

*v.* 115. *Dr. J. Edwards, Theologia*, iii. 402; *J. Marriott*, 309.

"Cities fall, kingdoms come to nothing, empires fade away as smoke. Where is Numa, Minos, Lycurgus; where are their books, and what is become of their laws? But that this Book no tyrant should have been able to consume, no tradition to choke, no heretic maliciously to corrupt; that it should stand unto this day, amid the wreck of all that is human, without the alteration of one sentence so as to change the doctrine taught therein, surely there is a very singular providence claiming our attention in a most remarkable manner." — *Bp. Jewell.*

*a Spk. Com.*, Is. lxiii. 3.

*b* Is. xliv. 20.

*c* Eze. xxii. 18, 20.

*d* Je. vi. 28—30; Mal. iii. 2, 3.

*e* "Strictly used of the hair as standing erect in terror (see Job iv. 15)." — *Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 116. *T. Dorrington* iii, 181; *J. P. Hewlett*, 173; *Dr. H. Draper*, i. 266, v. 120; *T. Ashton*, i. 686.

*f C. Richardson* (1612).

*a* Job xvii. 3; Is xxxviii. 14.
*b* Ps. cfii. 10.
"The poetry of the Bible has been the forming power of the greatest modern poems; for Tasso, Milton, and Cowper present in high relief the features of its moving hand. And its high and aspiring spirit, its heavenward tendencies, its ethereal sanctities, its judicial grandeur, have given birth to those sublime creations in architecture and painting which are seen in the works of Michael Angelo, and may be designated the school of Christian art. Nor is there any department of human thought or effort that Biblically educated men have not enriched or adorned."—*Dr. Beard.*
"The antiquarian and the naturalist, the politician and the legislator, the poet and the philosopher, the moralist and the divine, the man of retirement and the man of the world, the man of reason and the man of fancy—all find in Scripture a helper toward the discovery of truth and the attainment of happiness; a guide to the understanding, a corrector and supporter of the imagination, a comforter of the heart, a teacher of wisdom, a rule of faith, a source of joy."—*Hawker.*
"The Bible contains, independently of a Divine origin, more

121—124. (121) justice, better, "righteousness." (122) be surety, *i.e.* "grant me a guarantee of eventual deliverance and prosperity."[a] (123) eyes fail, comp. *v.* 82. (124) thy mercy,[b] wh. gives tone to God's judgments.

*The Bible the theme of Psalm cxix.*—This is the longest portion of Holy Writ devoted so exclusively to one theme. Only two of the verses (122, 132) do not expressly mention the great topic running through the whole. At least ten different words are employed to designate the holy volume as it existed in the time of the Psalmist,—word, way, law, statute, commandment, precept, testimony, faithfulness, truth, and righteousness; which, for the sake of variety, appear to be used promiscuously and with interchangeable signification. The Psalm consists of twenty-two equal divisions, arranged in accordance with the number and succession of letters in the Hebrew alphabet. Each division contains eight verses, and in the original each verse of the several divisions begins with the same Hebrew letter as stands for its heading in our English Bible. Thus the first eight verses begin each with a word whose initial letter is Aleph; the second division with words whose first letter is Beth; and so through the Psalm and through the alphabet. In accordance too, with that subdivision, the name Jehovah occurs in the Hebrew twenty-two times.— *Circulation of the Bible.*—The British and Foreign Bible Society may be adduced as forming the most remarkable illustration of the progress made during the present century in leavening the world with the Word of God. Previous to its formation in 1804 there was not one society in existence whose sole object was the distribution of the Bible in all lands. There are now upwards of 50 principal and 9,000 auxiliary Bible Societies. In 1804 the Bible was accessible to only 200,000,000 of men. Now it exists in tongues spoken by 600,000,000. The London Bible Society alone sends forth annually upwards of 1,787,000 copies. During the last sixty years it has issued 39,315,226 Bibles in 163 different languages, and in 143 translations never before printed. Its receipts for 1862 amount to £168,443. It surely cannot fail to fill the heart of every Christian with deepest thankfulness to contemplate the glorious achievements of the last sixty years in circulating the Word of God. The Church, like the angel seen in prophetic vision, has been flying with the everlasting Gospel to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people. It has given the Bible to the inhabitants of the old lands of Egypt, Ethiopia, Arabia, Palestine, Asia Minor, and Persia; to the indomitable Circassian; the mountaineers of Afghanistan; to tribes of India speaking thirty-two different languages or dialects; to the inhabitants of Burmah, Assam, and Siam; to the islanders of Madagascar and Ceylon; to the Malays and Javanese of the eastern seas; to the millions of China and the wandering Kalmuck beyond her great wall; to the brave New Zealander; to the teeming inhabitants of the island groups which are scattered over the Southern Pacific; to the African races, from the Cape to Sierra Leone; to the Esquimaux and Greenlander within the Arctic circle: and to the Indian tribes of North America. All are now furnished with a translation of that wonderful volume which, with the light of the universal living Spirit of God, at once reveals to man, in every age and clime, his

lost and miserable condition, and tells him of a remedy that is adapted to meet every want of his being—to redeem him by a moral power it alone can afford from all sin and misery, and to bring him into the glorious fellowship of the holiness, the blessedness, and joy of Jesus Christ, and all the family of God in earth and heaven! The American Bible Society circulates upwards of 600,000 copies of the Word of God annually, at home and abroad. Besides assisting in publishing translations issued by other societies, it has been at the sole expense of publishing the Armenio-Turkish and Modern Syriac New Testament; the entire Bible for the Burmese, and also for the Sandwich Islands; the Ojibbeway New Testament; the Gospels, or some portion of the Bible, into the languages of the Sioux, Mohawk, Seneca, and Cherokee Indians.[c]

125—128. (125) **am thy servant**, and so have claim upon Thy help. (126) **time . . work**, *i.e.* to interpose with His Divine judgments.[a] **made void thy law**, comp. Ezr. x. 18; Ne. xiii. 4—7. (127) **above gold**, Ps. xix. 10; Pr. viii. 11. (128) **false way**, *vv.* 29, 104. The words in this verse (concerning all things) are of doubtful authority.

*The worker most wanted* (*v.* 126).—The time for God to work is all time. For every work God has given laws. Men have all gone aside from these laws. We will look—I. At the complaint. I. Men make the law void by misinterpretation; 2. When being understood it is practically ignored; 3. When it is defiantly violated. II. The appeal. There are three things God may do. 1. Vindicate His law by punishment; 2. Bring forward His law by republishing it; 3. Pardon the transgression, and rewrite His law on the heart.[b]

*True-heartedness in work.*—A musician is not recommended for playing long, but for playing well. It is obeying God willingly that is accepted. The Lord hates that which is forced: it is rather paying a tax than an offering. Cain served God grudgingly: he brought his sacrifice, not his heart. Good duties must not be pressed nor beaten out of us, as the waters came out of the rock when Moses smote it with his rod; but must freely drop from us, as myrrh from the tree, or honey from the comb. If a willing mind be wanting, there wants that flower which should perfume our obedience, and make it a sweet-smelling savour to God.[c]—*Supremacy of the Bible.*—Ah, Philosophy! thou hast never yet, as this book, taught a man how to die! Reason! with thy flickering torch thou hast never yet guided to such sublime mysteries, such comforting truths as these. Science! thou hast penetrated the arcana of nature, sunk thy shafts into earth's recesses, unburied its stores, counted its strata, measured the height of its massive pillars down to the very pedestals of primeval granite. Thou hast tracked the lightning, traced the path of the tornado, uncurtained the distant planet, foretold the coming of the comet, and the return of the eclipse. But thou hast never been able to gauge the depth of man's soul, or to answer the question, "What must I do to be saved?" No, no! this antiquated volume is still the "Book of books," the oracle of oracles, the beacon of beacons, the poor man's treasury, the child's companion, the sick man's health, the dying man's life, shallows for the infant to walk in, depths for giant intellect to explore and adore! Philosophy, if she would own it, is indebted true sublimity, more exquisite beauty, more pure morality, more important history, and finer strains both of poetry and of eloquence, than could be collected within the same compass from all other books that were ever composed in any age or in any idiom."—*Sir W. Jones.*

*c Dr. Macleod.*

*a* "The verse seems appropriate in a time of some great falling away from Jehovah."—*Syk. Com.*

Je. xviii. 23; Eze. xxxi. 11.

*b S. Martin.*

Lady Frances Hobart read the Psalms over twelve times a year, the New Testament thrice, and the other parts of the Old Testament once. Susannah, countess of Suffolk, for the last seven years of her life, read the whole Bible over twice annually.

*v.* 127. *T Blackley*, i. 177.

*c T. Watson* (1660).

"That there are difficulties in the Bible no one need deny; but these difficulties do not affect its Divine origin any more than the difficulties in nature affect the truth of its Divine origin. Because a man cannot comprehend all the difficulties which meet him in very many of the pages of the book of nature, would he be wise

in saying that God was not the Creator of it? How, then, can he be wise who, for a similar reason, denounces the Bible as the book of God?"—*John Bate.*

*d J. A. Macduff.*

*a* "Miraculous, far exceeding aught conceived by man, supplying ever new instructions."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* Ln. xxiv. 27, 32.

*c* "Like one oppressed with burning heat, and longing for some cool spring of water, or some fresh breeze to fan his brow."—*Perowne.*

*d G. Brooks.*

*v.* 129. *B. Beddome*, vii. 106; *J. G. Dowling*, 342.

*v.* 130. *Dr. G. Croft, Bamp. Lect.* 27.

*v.* 132. *W. Jay*, iv. 126; *S. E. Pierce*, 151.

here for the noblest of her maxims: Poetry, for the loftiest of her themes. Painting has gathered here her noblest inspiration. Music has ransacked these golden stores for the grandest of her strains. And if there be life in the Church of Christ—if her ministers and missionaries are carrying the torch of salvation through the world—where is that torch lighted but at these same undying altar-fires? When a philosophy, "falsely so called," shall become dominant, and seek with its proud dogmas to supersede this Divine philosophy; when the old Bible of David, and Timothy, and Paul, is clasped and closed, the only morality and philosophy worth speaking of will have perished from the earth. Dagon will have taken the place of God's ark—the world's funeral pile may be kindled![d]

129—132. (129) **wonderful**, *vv.* 18, 27.[a] (130) **entrance**, opening, or revelation of;[b] or declaration. (131) **panted**, comp. Ps. xlii. I.[c] (132) **usest to do**, according to Thy wonted custom.

*The Bible a wonderful book* (*v.* 129).—I. In its authorship—inspiration. II. Its substance—the contents of the Bible. III. Its style—literary characteristics. IV. Its preservation—history. V. Its effects—civilisation, conversion. VI. Its destiny—endure for ever.[d]

*The power of truth* (*v.* 130).—The celebrated Gilbert West and Lord Lyttleton, both men of acknowledged talent, had received the principles of infidelity from a superficial view of the Scriptures. They agreed together to expose what they termed the imposture of the Bible: and Mr. West chose the resurrection of Christ, and Lord Lyttleton the conversion of St. Paul, as the subject of their criticism. Both sat down to their respective tasks full of prejudice and a contempt for Christianity. But what was the result? They were both converted by their endeavour to overthrow the truth of Scripture. They came together not, as they expected, to exult over an imposture exposed to ridicule, but to lament their former unbelief, and to congratulate each other that they had discovered the truth of revelation. They published their inquiries, which form two of the most valuable treatises now existing in favour of the truth of God's Word; one entitled, *Observations on the Conversion of St. Paul*, and the other, *Observations on the Resurrection of Christ.*

133—136. (133) **order my steps**,[a] take the rule and management of them. **iniquity**, wandering wilfulness, applied to steps. (134) **oppression**, Psalmist asks deliverance in his fear that by it he might yet be overborne. (135) **face to shine**,[b] with the smiles of gracious acceptance. (136) **rivers of waters**, a strong poetical expression.[c]

*Glorious tears* (*v.* 136).—Tears are revelations of the soul: they express various emotions. What were the tears of David now? I. They were the tears of a patriot—the commonwealth endangered by disobedience to the laws of God. II. They were the tears of a philanthropist—human interests endangered by disobedience. III. They were the tears of a religionist—they flowed from regard to the honour of God.[d]

*The value of the Bible.*—It was remarked by one, "If I have been honoured to do any good in my day; if I have been of any

*a* Ps. xvii. 5, xix. 13, 14; He. xii. 13.

*b* Nu. vi. 25, 26.

*c* Most of the Easterns shed tears much more copiously than the people of Europe. I have myself seen Arabs shed tears like streams."—*Gadsby.*

*d Dr. Thomas.*

The Rev. William Romaine studied

use to the Church of Christ, to my family, and to my fellow-creatures; if I have enjoyed any happiness in life—and I am happy to say I have had a large share; if I have any hope beyond the grave—and that hope I would not exchange for a thousand worlds—I owe all to the Bible." About eighty years ago a motion was made in Parliament for raising and embodying the Militia, and, for the purpose of saving time, to exercise them on the Sabbath. When the motion was likely to pass, an old gentleman stood up and said, "Mr. Speaker, I have one objection to this; I believe in an old book called the Bible." The members looked at one another, and the motion was dropped.—*A long journey for a Bible.*—Two men came one night to Mr. Ellis, the missionary of Madagascar. They had walked a hundred miles out of their way to visit him. "Have you the Bible?" asked Mr. Ellis. "We have seen it and heard it read," one man said; "but we have only some of the words of David, and they do not belong to us; they belong to the whole family." "Have you the words of David with you now?" asked Mr. Ellis. They looked at each other, and would not give answer. Perhaps they were afraid; but Mr. Ellis spoke kindly to them. Then one of the men put his hand into his bosom, and took out what seemed to be a roll of cloth. He unrolled it; and, after taking off some wrappers, behold there were a few old, torn, dingy leaves of the Psalms, which had been read, passed around, lent, and reread, until they were almost worn out! Tears came to Mr. Ellis's eyes when he saw them. "Have you ever seen the words of Jesus, or John, or Paul, or Peter?" asked the missionary. "Yes," they said, "we have seen and heard them; but we never owned them." Mr. Ellis then went and brought out a Testament with the book of Psalms bound up with it, and showed it to them. "Now," said he, "if you will give me your few words of David, I will give you all his words; all the words of Jesus, and John, and Paul, and Peter besides." The men were amazed and delighted: but they wanted to see if the words of David were the same in Mr. Ellis's book; and when they found they were, and thousands more of the same sort, their joy knew no bounds. They willingly gave up their poor tattered leaves, seized the volume, bade the missionary good-bye, and started off upon their long journey home, rejoicing like one who has found a great spoil. Did not these poor men prize the Bible? and had not they found a treasure?

nothing but the Bible for the last thirty or forty years of his life.

v. 136. *Abp. B. Leighton*, iii. 165; *J. Saurin*, v. 359; *T. Morer*, 109; *Dr. T. M'Crie*, 347.

"The ancient Greeks had one sentence which they believed, though without foundation, to have descended from heaven; and to evince their gratitude and veneration for this gift, they caused it to be engraved in letters of gold on the front of their most sacred and magnificent temple. We, more favoured, have not one sentence only, but a volume, which really descended from heaven; and which, whether we consider its contents or its Author, ought to be indelibly impressed on the heart of every child of Adam."—*Dr. Payson.*

"Truth is truth, though from an enemy, and spoken in malice."—*Lillo.*

**137—139.** (137) **upright . . judgments,** or all expressions of Thy will. (138) **very faithful,** or exceeding faithfulness. (139) **zeal,** *etc.*, Ps. lxix. 9.

*Consuming effect of zeal* (*v.* 139).—It has been asked, How can zeal consume? Home observes that zeal is certainly a high degree of love; and when the object of that love is ill-treated, the feeling of grief and indignation is likely to "consume" the heart. "His spirit was stirred," adds another commentator, and he became almost sick with uneasiness, because he could not arrest the enemies of God in their impiety and rebellion. As we have it elsewhere, "The zeal of Thine house hath eaten me up."

v. 137. *Bossuet*, i. 306; *J. Reeve*, i. 252.

"I have seldom known any one who deserted truth in trifles that could be trusted in matters of importance."—*Paley.*

**140—144.** (140) **very pure,** *i.e.* tried; well refined;[a] fire-proved, as smelted metal.[b] (141) **small,** insignificant: held in little esteem. (142) **everlasting righteousness,** *i.e.* an abso-

[a] "Tried to the uttermost."—*Pr. Bk. Vers.*

[b] Ps. xii. 6.

lute, perfect righteousness. (143) taken hold, Heb. *found.* (144) righteousness, *etc.*, comp. *vv.* 137, 138.

*The Word and the servant of God* (*v.* 140).—I. The honest believer is not ashamed of his profession. 1. He places his time at God's disposal: 2. He is accountable to his Master; 3. He is interested in his Master's truth; 4. He regards the service of God as honourable, profitable, pleasant, easy. II. He has the most exalted idea of the Word of God. 1. Pure, without the least mixture of error; 2. Pure fountain, without any mixture of poison; 3. Pure gold, without the least alloy; 4. Grace, without any mixture of human merit. III. Hence he esteems it supremely because of its—1. Invitations; 2. Promises; 3. Threatenings; 4. Precepts; 5. Doctrines. IV. Reasons why he so highly esteems God's Word. 1. For its purity: this argues his heart is pure; 2. Simplicity: this argues his soul sincere; 3. Impartiality: this argues a lover of equity; 4. Authority: this argues he loves the Word as the Word of God; 5. Spirituality: this argues his spirituality of mind.[c]

*The law just and perfect* (*v.* 142).—"The word applied to the 'law of God' (the *torah*) is derived from a verb signifying 'to cast,' 'to send out' thence, 'to put forth,' as the hand for the purpose of giving directions, 'to point out,' 'to indicate,' 'to teach.' The law is that which indicates or points out to us the mind of God." It may be interesting to compare the distinct radical notions of the several terms employed respectively in the Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, for the idea of justice or righteousness. The Hebrew term denotes that which is perfectly straight; the Latin *jus*, from *jubeo*, *jussi*, that which is commanded; and the Greek *dike*, that which divides equally to all—apportions to every one is due. The thought expressed by the Hebrew root is deeper than that which is conveyed either by the Latin or Greek. The Romans were a military people, a nation of soldiers, and the idea of rightness was in their minds naturally associated with that of obedience to orders. The Greeks were a people foremost in all that ministers to social enjoyment and civilisation, and their idea of rightness was that which secured to all the possession of his due. The thought of an antecedent and eternal distinction between right and wrong, apart altogether from present results of good and evil, runs through the whole system of Old Testament morality, and that thought is graphically presented to us under the image of that which is perfectly straight. Truth, again, in Hebrew firmness, is in Greek that which cannot be hid, or that which is unconcealed; open, in opposition to falsehood, which lurks in the darkness. Such an instance serves to show how full of practical teaching may be the details of philology, and to remind us of our Lord's words: "He that doeth truth cometh to the light." "Truth, says the Greek derivation, is 'that which cannot be hid;' it may be suppressed for a time—it may seem to be buried for ever; but its very nature secures its ultimate revival and resurrection." The Hebrew derivation again reminds us of its indestructible firmness. The everlasting hills may tremble, the solid rocks may be shattered to atoms, the "heaven and earth may pass" (Matt. v. 18), but truth remains immovable.[d]

145—148. (145) cried, with the prayer of the anxious heart. (146) and I shall, better, *that I may.* (147) prevented the dawning, notice the older use of the word *prevent*.[a] "I antici-

[c] *G. Lea.*

v. 140. *J. Weemse*, ii. 209.

v. 144. *F. D. Maurice*, on the Prayer Bk. 98.

"Sin is Satan's ladder. It has its top on earth, its foot in hell. God's ladder has its foot on earth and its top in heaven. Such a ladder is the Bible. And it is impossible for any human being with understanding, heart and soul, to place foot upon it and traverse it step by step, either to reach hell or even to remain a wicked or worldly-minded man. It must, of inevitable necessity, land him in heaven. Just as the sun, which God created to give light, never pours forth darkness; even so the Bible, which God gave to point the way to heaven, never leads to hell, nay, is never content to leave on earth. It always and invariably, like the needle to the north pole, points to heaven, and offers wings to waft the weary wanderer home."—*R. B. Nichol.*

"A valuable truth can never want the meretricious dress of wit to set it off: this dress is a strong presumption of the falsehood of what it covers."—*Egerton Brydges.*

[d] *H. Craik.*

[a] To anticipate; to go to meet.

[b] "The night in early times was

pated the dawning." Early; before others; in the gloom before the dawn. (148) **mine . . watches,**[b] *i.e.* none of these night-watches, at their commencement, find him asleep.

*David's desire to serve God* (*vv.* 145—148).—I. The object of his desire. 1. It argues a nobler disposition; 2. It shows juster views of nature and source of true happiness; 3. It corresponds with the ends which the Governor of the universe proposes to Himself in all His dispensations. II. The ardour of his pursuit marked by—1. Fervent and continual prayer; 2. A believing dependence on God's Word. Apply:—(1) How are your minds affected by eternal things? (2) What are your views and purposes for the future?[c]

*The word "prevent"* (*vv.* 147, 148).—Prevent is derived from the Latin *præcenire*, to come before, in order to remove any obstacle, and at the time of the translation of the Bible this was the accepted meaning of the English word. Changes in our language have now reversed that definition, and instead of implying help it is now used to signify a hindrance. The texts quoted above may therefore be worded thus:—"I awoke before the dawning of the day." And *v.* 148, "I awoke before the night watches had passed away, that I might meditate in Thy Word." In other passages the word prevent may be rendered anticipate, as, for instance, Ps. lxxix. 8: "Let Thy tender mercies speedily anticipate, or supply my wants;" and the same words may be used in such passages as Ps. xxi. 3, lix. 10. The Hebrew word *kadam* is more comprehensive than its English equivalent prevent; for in addition to the definitions already given, *kadam* signifies to come to meet for the purpose of rendering assistance, then to seize; also, to fall upon (as a calamity). These will explain more clearly the use of the word prevent in Job iii. 12, "Why did the knees welcome me?" Job xli. 11, "Who hath done me a kindness, that I should repay him?" Ps. xviii. 5, 18; Isa. xxi. 14; Amos ix. 10, "The evil shall not overtake nor seize upon us."—*Stories of the Bible.*—I might show you the first load of Bibles taken to Wales just fifty years ago, the people going out to meet the cart that carried them, as if it had been Israel's ark, drawing it in triumph into the town, bearing away the blessed volume with overflowing heart, young people sitting up all night to read it, and labourers taking it with them to the fields and loving it as I cannot describe. I might show you the Tahitians, when France took possession of their island not many years ago, hurrying to the mountains and leaving their Bibles with the missionaries till they should come back, to save them carrying them so far; and ere long they were back in the face of all danger, to say they could not live without their Bibles, and must have them whatever should befall. There is an Irish peasant copying with his own hand the entire Scriptures. There is a Hindoo dying, and under his head lies his treasure. What is it? Some dirty scraps of paper, worn and tattered, which he had got years ago—texts of the Bible translated and written by a missionary, before Bibles in the language were to be had. There is a soldier hiding it in his bosom as he goes to the wars, and a sailor tying it round his waist as the most precious thing on board, ere the vessel goes down. There is one calling it his best earthly friend; and another, his book of bank-notes; and another, sweeter than honey, better than gold.[d]

divided into 3 watches, the first, La. ii. 19; the second, Ju. vii. 19; the third, Ex. xiv. 24; 1 Sa. xi. 11."—*Spk. Com.*

[c] *C. Simeon, M.A.* "It has been subjected, along with many other books, to the fire of the keenest investigation—a fire which has contemptuously burned up the cosmogony of the Shaster, the absurd fables of the Koran—nay, the husbandry of the Georgics, the historical truth of Livy, the artistic merit of many a popular poem, the authority of many a book of philosophy and science. And yet there this artless, loosely-piled book lies unhurt, untouched, with not one page singed, and not even the smell of fire has passed upon it."—*G. Gilfillan.*

"In the fabulous records of pagan antiquity we read of a mirror endowed with properties so rare that by looking into it its possessor could discover any object which he wished to see, however remote; and discover with equal ease persons and things above, below, behind, and before him. Such a mirror, but infinitely more valuable than this fictitious glass, do we possess in the Bible; by employing it in a proper manner we may discern objects and events, past, present, and to come.

Here we may contemplate the all-enfolding circle of the eternal mind, and behold a perfect portrait of Him whom no mortal eye hath seen, drawn by His own unerring hand."—*Dr. Payson.*

*J. H. Wilson.*

*a* 2 Ki. vi. 13—18.

*b W. H. H. Murray.*

*v.* 152. *L. Holden*, 27; *Dr. A. Grant*, ii. 35.

"And can, then, true philosophy reject as false a book which the same sterling truths as reason, following closely, brings to light, maintains with such corroborations? Seal'd with the broad signet of the Eternal One stamp'd upon all its pages? Is it true philosophy, without examining, will scorn a book that purports to entail eternal bliss, or everlasting woe, on its acceptance or rejection? Oh! I could almost respond in the prophet's words, Would that my head were waters, and my eyes fountains of tears, that I might weep nightly and daily through life's passing years for human blindness and for human sin."—*T. Ragg.*

*c G. Gilfillan.*

*a* Eph. ii. 4—6.

"Before I knew the Word of God in spirit and in truth, for its great antiquity, its interesting narratives, its impartial biography, its pure mo-

149—152. (149) judgment, or righteous decree. (150) draw nigh, as with hostile intent. (151) near, nearer than my foes."[a] (152) known of old, or, for a long time, therefore it is a thoroughly established conviction.

*The nearness of God* (*v.* 151).—I. God is near us in the hour of human desertion. II. God is near us in the hour of temptation. III. The nearness of God is seen in the various experiences of our life and growth.[b]

*Influence of God's Word.*—A writer in the *Sunday at Home* says, "When I was at Calcutta in 1844, it happened that a Christian gentleman of high rank, and a great Oriental scholar, had engaged the rabbi of the synagogue to translate the New Testament into Hindee. Much intercourse necessarily followed. Months rolled on in this way, until the seed of the Word had taken root in a heart prepared to receive it. Silently did the Holy Spirit bring home saving truth to the mind of this Jewish priest, as from day to day he continued to search the Scriptures. Gradually light broke in upon an awakened soul, which was now fully prepared to appreciate the perfection and beauty of Gospel lore, until the Sun of Righteousness arose in full splendour, chasing away mists and darkness, constraining him to declare to several of his brethren that he had found the Messiah.—*Gatherings of the Bible.*—Shining forth from the excellent glory, its light has been reflected on a myriad of intervening objects, till it has been at length attempered for our earthly vision. It now beams upon us at once from the heart of men and from the countenance of nature. . . . It has gathered new beauty from the works of creation, and new warmth and new power from the passions of clay. It has pressed into its service the animals of the forest, the flowers of the field, the stars of heaven, all the elements of nature. The lion spurning the sands of the desert, the wild roe leaping over the mountains, the lamb led in silence to the slaughter, the goat speeding to the wilderness, the rose blossoming in Sharon, the lily drooping in the valley, the apple tree bowing under its fruit, the great rock shadowing a weary land, the river gladdening the dry place, the moon and the morning star, Carmel by the sea, and Tabor among the mountains, the dew from the womb of the morning, the rain upon the mown grass, the rainbow encompassing the landscape; the light, God's shadow; the thunder, His voice: the wind and the earthquake, His footsteps; all such varied objects are made as if naturally designed from their creation to represent Him to whom the Book and all its emblems point. Thus the quick spirit of the Book has ransacked creation to lay its treasures on Jehovah's altar—united the innumerable rays of a far-streaming glory on the little hill Calvary—and woven a garland for the bleeding brow of Immanuel, the flowers of which have been culled from the garden of a universe.[c]

153—156. (153) consider, *etc.*, see *v.* 107. (154) plead, *etc.*, Ps. xxxv. 1. (155) far from, they are not at all in the way of receiving it. Only penitent souls ever even care for God's salvations. (156) great," marg. *many.*

*The spirit of the Bible* (*v.* 156).—This quickening according to the judgments, or Word of God, I consider the same thing as having the spirit of the Bible within us. I. Inquire what is that spirit? It is its moral peculiarity—the temper and spirit it

breathes, and with which it imbues the mind that receives it. It is a spirit of truth, love, purity, humility, confidence, obedience. II. How may it be transferred? By frequent reading, true-hearted prayer, walking by its rules, depending on the Holy Spirit. III. The importance of being imbued with this spirit: it constitutes true nobility of soul, correct moral decisions, tranquillity of mind, prepares for religious service, influences for good in the world: preparation for death, assurance of final acceptance.[b]

*The Brahmin and the Bible.*—The Rev. Mr. Robinson, a missionary at Serampore, tells us of a Brahmin who called upon him for a copy of the Bible, which he immediately gave him. The man went away, and Mr. Robinson never heard of him again till some years after, when one of the native preachers, on a missionary tour, heard at a village called Dahkinhâla that in the vicinity there lived one Gopimohan, who always kept near him and frequently read a holy book, which he took for his guide in all spiritual things. In accordance with its precepts he had cast away his idol gods, performed no pujas (idolatrous feasts), but always spoke of the Scriptures, and worshipped the one God they set forth.

157—160. (157) many, *etc.*, Ps. iii. 1, 2, 3. (158) grieved, lit. *felt loathing.*[a] (159) consider, *etc.*, see *v.* 153.[b] (160) thy word, *i.e.* the "sum total" of Thy Word; "the aggregate of all the individual precepts of God's Word."

*Holy sorrow* (*v.* 158).—I. In the text we have a contemplation of the prevalent habits and character of mankind. 1. God has actually established a law of government of mankind; 2. There is among mankind a prevalent and fearfully extended rebellion against this law; 3. Their case should be made the matter of frequent and serious meditation. II. A record of the emotion which this contemplation properly and specially produces on the pious mind. 1. For what reasons this emotion must be excited: because sin is so insulting to God, so fatal to the happiness of mankind; 2. What conduct this emotion should prompt: personal separation from sin, personal exertion in the diffusion of truth, personal prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.[c]

*Patrick Henry.*—This distinguished man was a native of Virginia, of which state he became governor. He was eminent through life as a statesman and an orator. A little before his death, he remarked to a friend, who found him reading his Bible, "Here is a book worth more than all the other books which ever were printed; yet it is my misfortune never to have, till lately, found time to read it with proper attention and feeling."

161—164. (161) princes, *v.* 23. standeth in awe, "dreads any violation of Thy law far above the force of prince or potentate."[a] (162) findeth . . spoil, Ju. v. 30; Is. ix. 3. (163) lying, wh. represents all kinds of falseness and deception.[b] (164) seven times, a fig. of speech for "constantly, throughout the day."

*Rejoicing in the Word* (*v.* 162).—You who have profited by reading the Holy Scriptures, adore God's distinguishing grace. Bless God that He hath not only brought the light to you, but opened your eyes to see it; that He hath unlocked His hid treasure, and enriched you with saving knowledge. That God should pass by millions in the world, and the lot of His electing

rality, its sublime poetry, in a word, for its beautiful and wonderful variety, I preferred it to all other books; but since I have entered into its spirit, like the Psalmist, I love it above all things for its purity; and desire whatever else I read, it may tend to increase my knowledge of the Bible, and strengthen my affection for its Divine and holy truths."—*Sir W. Jones.*

*b R. Robbins.*

*a* Ps. cxxxix. 21.

"The recreants I survey, and loathing turn away."—*Keble.*

*b* Job i. 8.

*c J. Parsons.*

*v.* 158. *T. Dorrington*, ii. 1; *Dr. P. Doddridge*, i. 291.

*v.* 160. *J. Buckworth*, 18.

"Truth is the joining or separating of signs, as the things signified agree or disagree."—*Locke.*

*a Spk. Com.*

*b* "What is specially meant is 'false faiths,' deviations fr. that religion wh. the Psalmist so constantly declares to be 'truth.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 161. *W. Enfield*, ii. 221.

"The most learned, acute,

and diligent student cannot, in the longest life, obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume. The more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore; new light continually beams from this source of heavenly knowledge, to direct the conduct, and illustrate the work of God and the ways of men; and he will at least leave the world confessing that the more he studied the Scriptures, the fuller conviction he had of his own ignorance, and of their inestimable value."—*Sir Walter Scott.*
*c T. Watson.*
*d R. Pollock.*

love should fall upon you; that the Scripture, like the "pillar of cloud," should have a dark side to others, but a light side to you; that to others it should be a "dead letter," but to you the savour of life; that Christ should not only be revealed to you, but in you;—how should you be in an holy ecstasy of wonder, and wish that you had hearts of seraphims burning in love to God, and the voices of angels to make Heaven ring with God's praises![c]

*The Bible.*—

The Bible! hast thou ever heard
Of such a book! the author, God Himself;
The subject, God and man, salvation, life
And death—eternal life—eternal death—
Dread words! whose meaning has no end, no bounds!
Most wondrous book! bright candle of the Lord!—
This book—this holy book, on every line
Mark'd with the seal of high Divinity,
On every leaf bedew'd with drops of love
Divine; and with the eternal heraldry
And signature of God Almighty stamp'd
From first to last; this ray of sacred light,
This lamp, from off the everlasting throne,
Mercy took down, and in the night of Time
Stood, casting on the dark her gracious bow,
And evermore beseeching men, with tears
And earnest sighs, to read, believe, and live.[d]

165—168. (165) **nothing**, *etc.*, they have no occasion of stumbling.[a] (166) **hoped**, waiting anxiously.[b] (167) **hath kept**, up to this present. (168) **before thee**, *i.e.* fully known to Thee.

*The blessedness of those who love the law of God* (*v.* 165).—I. The character of the law here referred to. 1. A mirror of truth; 2. A revelation of mercy; 3. A rule of life. II. The blessedness of those who love this law. 1. The happiness of their minds; 2. The stability of their goings. Apply—(1) To those who possess not this character; (2) To those who, although they profess to have attained it, enjoy not the blessings connected with it.[c]

*Peace from love to the Bible* (*v.* 165).—"By a sudden burst of water into one of the Newcastle collieries, thirty-five men and forty-one lads were driven into a distant part of the pit, from which there was no possibility of return until the water should have been drawn off. While this was being effected, though all possible means were used, the whole number gradually died from hunger or from suffocation. When the bodies were drawn up from the pit, seven of the youths were discovered in a cavern, separate from the rest. Among them was one of peculiarly moral and religious habits, whose daily reading of the sacred Scriptures to his widowed mother, when he came up from his labour, had formed the solace of her lonely condition. After his funeral, a sympathising friend of the neglected poor went to visit her, and while the mother showed him, as a relic of her son, his Bible, worn and soiled with constant perusal, he happened to cast his eyes on a candle-box, with which, as a miner, the boy had been furnished, and which had been brought up from the pit with him; and there the visitor discovered the following affecting record of the filial affection and steadfast

*a* "When God's law is loved, instead of being struggled against, the conscience is at peace, and the inward eye is clear; a man sees his duty and does it, free from those stumbling-blocks wh. are ever occasion of falling to others."—*Peronne.*

*b* Ge. xlix. 18.

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

*v.* 165. *Abp. Tillotson*, i. 279; *W. Dugmore*, 57; *Bp. Sherlock*, iii. 132; *H. Stebbing*, ii. 115; *T. Hobbes*, 158; *W. Snowden*, ii. 372; *W. Richardson*, ii. 82.

*d L. Richmond.*

"Most wondrous book! bright candle of the

piety of the youth. In the darkness of the suffocating pit, with a bit of pointed iron, he had engraved on the box his last message to his mother, in these words—'Fret not, my dear mother; for we were singing and praising God while we had time. Mother, follow God more than ever I did. Joseph, be a good lad to God and to mother.'"[d]

169—172. (169) **cry**, a mournful, supplicatory cry, as *v.* 170. (170) **word**, of assurance and promise. (171) **praise**, of thankfulness and renewed trust. **hast taught**, better, "dost teach." (172) **tongue**, as the instrument of spoken praise.

*God sees us.*—Julius Drusus, a Roman tribune, had a house that in many places lay exposed to the view of the neighbourhood. A person came and offered that for five talents he would so alter it that it should not be liable to that inconvenience. "I will give thee ten talents," said Drusus, "if thou canst make my house conspicuous in every room of it, so that all the city may behold in what manner I lead my life." It would be well for us all to consider that we are thus exposed to the eye of God.

173—176. (173) **help me**, out of present distress. (174) **have longed**, and do still long. (175) **judgments**, or actings on my behalf. (176) **gone astray**, it would not be consistent with the rest of the Ps. to interpret this of wilful wanderings.[a] "It illustrates the condition of Israel in the captivity. But God was their Shepherd, and sought them out, and brought them home to their ancient fold."[b]

*A good habit.*—Sir Harbottle Grimstone, Master of the Rolls, an eminent lawyer, a just judge, and a person of large fortune, who lived in the 17th century, was a very pious and devout man, and spent every morning and evening, at least an hour in meditation and prayer. And even in winter, when he was obliged to be very early on the bench, he took care to rise soon enough to have the time he usually devoted to these exercises.[c]—*Stray of the Bible.*—The Bible is read of a Sabbath in all the 10,000 pulpits of our land. The sun never sets on its gleaming page. It goes equally to the cottage of the plain man and the palace of the king. It is woven into literature, and it colours the talk of the street. The barque of the merchant cannot sail to sea without it. No ship of war goes to the conflict but the Bible is there. It enters men's closets; mingles in all grief and cheerfulness of life. The aching head finds a softer pillow when the Bible lies underneath. It blesses us when we are born; gives names to half Christendom; rejoices with us; has sympathy for our mourning; tempers our grief to finer issues. It is the better part of our sermons. It lifts man above himself. The timid man, awaking from his dream of life, looks through the glass of Scripture, and his eye grows bright. He does not fear to stand alone—to tread the way unknown and distant—to take the death-angel by the hand, and bid farewell to wife and babes at home. Men rest on this their dearest hope. It tells them of God, and of His beloved Son; of earthly duties and of heavenly rest.[d]

Lord! Star of Eternity! The only star by which the bark of man can navigate the sea of life, and gain the coast of bliss securely; the only star which rose on time, and on its dark and troubled billows, still as generation, drifting swiftly by, succeeded generation, threw a ray of heaven's own light, and to the hills of God—the everlasting hills—pointed the sinner's eye."—*Pollock.*

*a* "The fig. seems in this place to denote the helpless condition of the Psalmist, without protectors, exposed to enemies, in the midst of whom he wanders, not knowing where to find rest and shelter."—*Peroune.*

*b Wordsworth.*

*c Cheever.*

"As a small mistake in levelling an arrow at the hand makes a great difference at the mark, so a small mistake in the notion of truth makes a wide difference in the practice of the ungodly."—*Hopkins.*

*d T. Parker.*

author and date, — unknown

*The first of the "Songs of Degrees." A cry of distress because of oppressive neighbours.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTIETH.*

1—4. (1) **I cried,** *i.e.* I have cried in the past, and do now cry still. The past and the present experiences are combined. (2) **lying lips,** this may refer to some personal enemy; or "the Psalmist may here personify his nation, and deal with the malicious slanders of surrounding nationalities."[a] (3) **given,** or added; "What calamities shall be heaped upon thee?" (4) **sharp arrows,** such as a warrior uses. **coals of juniper,** the broom, or *retem*. Still used by the Arabs as charcoal, and said to retain their heat an unusual time.[b]

*Deceiving parents* (*vv.* 3, 4).—Louisa Morton was returning from school one afternoon with a young companion, who said to her, "What book is that?" "*The Romance of the Forest*." She continued, "Does your mother allow you to read such books?" "Oh, no; but I do not let her see me reading them," replied Louisa, with a laugh. Her companion expressed both surprise and grief. Here they reached Louisa's house, and parted. It was not until Louisa had retired to her room that she had an opportunity of reading the novel. It was a winter's night; she threw a shawl over her shoulders, and sat poring over the book, until benumbed with cold. At length, feeling a soreness in her throat, she reluctantly laid aside the book; but it was in vain that she tried to sleep. She had caught a violent cold, which every moment increased. Her mother's anxiety was greater than her own, when upon entering her room in the morning, she found her feverish, and suffering from headache and sore throat. "You have taken a violent cold," said the mother. "Were you in any way exposed to a draught yesterday?" But Louisa did not tell the simple truth. This deceit, until confessed and forgiven, remained a heavy burden upon her conscience. The very sight of her mother, from whom she was receiving unceasing attention and kindness, caused a feeling of self-reproach, which she tried in vain to banish.[c]

5—7. (5) **Mesech,**[a] the country bet. the Black Sea and the Caspian. **Kedar,** one of the predatory hordes roaming the Arabian desert.[b] (6) **my soul,** or life. (7) **for peace,** lit. *I am peace.*

*The Christian in the world* (*v.* 5).—I. It is of little use to cry "Woe is me," better meet the difficulty and glorify God in the midst of it. II. Be holy, and so rebut the charge of inconsistency. III. Seek to be useful as well as consistent.[c]

*Cicero on war* (*vv.* 6, 7).—We could not expect the heathen to denounce a custom so emphatically their own; yet we find the wisest and best of them reprobating it in the strongest terms. Cicero speaks of war, "contention by violence, as belonging to the brutes," and complains bitterly of its effects on liberal arts and peaceful pursuits. "All our noble studies, all our reputation at the bar, all our professional assiduities are stricken from our hands as soon as the alarm of war is sounded. Wisdom itself, the mistress of affairs, is driven from the field. Force bears sway. The statesman is despised: the grim soldier alone is caressed. Legal proceedings cease. Claims are asserted and prosecuted, not according to law, but by force of arms."[d]

*a* Jennings and Lowe.

Ne. vi. 1—19.

*b* 1 Ki. xix. 4; Job xx. 4.

*c* The punishment of the slanderous tongue is appropriate; for itself is a sharp sword."—*Spk. Com.*

*a* 5. *J. Jackson, Morn. Ex.* i. 517.

*c* *Abbott.*

"The talkative listen to no one, for they are ever speaking. And the first evil that attends those who know not to be silent is, that they hear nothing."—*Plutarch.*

*a* Ge. x. 2; Eze. xxvii. 13.

*b* "The two names denote the rude and brutal neighbours, fr. whose molestations the Psalmist was suffering."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*c* *C. H. Spurgeon.*

*d* *Cheever.*

## PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIRST.

author and date,—unknown

*Subject, the consolation of Divine protection.*

1—4. (1) hills, the district round about Jerusalem, of which Mounts Zion and Moriah were sacred peaks. So it figures the protection of Jehovah, who dwelt there. from whence, better treated as a question, *whence, etc.?* (2) made . . earth,[a] so contrasts with local gods, and man-made idols. (3) he will not, this *v.* may be regarded as expressing a somewhat trembling hope. (4) neither slumber nor sleep, the language of firm and unquestioning confidence. God's delayings are never His slumberings.[b]

*Security of those who trust in God* (*vv.* 1—8).—I. The resolution David formed. 1. It was wise; 2. Pious; 3. Necessary. II. The encouragement given him to persevere in it. 1. In relation to temporal things; 2. In relation to the concerns of the soul. Apply—(1) To those who have no fears; (2) To those who are too much under the influence of fear.[c]

*Trust* (*v.* 4).—A number of years ago Captain D. commanded a vessel sailing from Liverpool to New York, and on one voyage he had all his family with him on board the ship. One night when all were quietly asleep, there arose a sudden squall of wind, which came sweeping over the waters until it struck the vessel, and instantly threw her on her side, tumbling and crashing everything that was movable, and awaking the passengers to a consciousness that they were in imminent peril. Every one on board was alarmed and uneasy; and some sprang from their berths and began to dress, that they might be ready for the worst. Captain D. had a little girl on board, just eight years old, who, of course, awoke with the rest. "What's the matter?" said the frightened child. They told her a squall had struck the ship. "Is father on deck?" said she. "Yes; father's on deck." The little thing dropped herself on her pillow again without a fear, and in a few moments was sleeping sweetly in spite of winds or waves.

> "Fear not the windy tempests wild,
> Thy bark they shall not wreck;
> Lie down and sleep, O helpless child!
> Thy Father's on the deck."

5—8. (5) shade,[a] a very forcible figure in that burning climate. right hand, the position taken by the friend, or advocate. (6) not smite, as with fatal sunstroke.[b] moon by night, this may be a poetical extension of the fig., but poss. reference may be intended to the baneful influence of sleeping in the moon's rays.[c] (7) all evil, evil of all kinds. (8) going . . in, *see* De. xxviii. 6. It covers all the life and occupations.

*God's preserving care* (*vv.* 7, 8).—I. The chequered scenes of life indicated: "going out," etc. II. For them we are not self-sufficient. Cannot—1. Foresee; 2. Forearm; 3. Prevent disasters; 4. Protect ourselves; 5. Command results. III. God has provided for the security of His people; this by His preserving care. Hence—1. He should have our prayers; 2. Our love; 3. Our praises.[d]

*Moonstruck* (*v.* 6).—The effect of the moonlight on the eyes in this country is singularly injurious. The natives tell you, as I

*a* Ps. cxv. 15, cxxiv. 8, cxxxiv. 3, cxlvi. 6.

*b* "Possibly allusion is made to the nightly encampment, and the sentries of the caravan."—*Perowne.*

*c* *C. Simeon, M.A.*

*v.* 1. *Dr. S. Davis,* i. 267; *Dr. C. J. Vaughan,* 164.

*v.* 4. *Dr. T. Featley, Cla. Mys.* 814.

The annexed was a favourite verse with an African missionary, who died some time ago: "I cannot always trace the way, where thou, Almighty One, dost move; but I can always, always say, that God is Love."

*a* Ps. xci. 1; Is. xxv. 4, xxxii. 2.

*b* 2 Ki. iv. 18—20; Jonah iv.

*c* "Even the moon's rays may become insupportable, may affect the eyes injuriously, and produce inflammation of the brain."—*Delitzsch.*

"The name given to persons of disordered intellect, *lunatics,* arose fr. the widespread

belief in the effects of the moon on those who were exposed to its influence."—*Peroune.*

*d Dr. J. Burns.*

*e Carne.*

found afterwards they also did in Arabia. always to cover your eyes when you sleep in the open air. It is rather strange that passage in the Psalms, "The sun shall not strike (smite) thee by day, nor the moon by night," should not have been thus illustrated, as the allusion seems direct. The moon here really strikes and affects the sight when you sleep exposed to it. much more than the sun, a fact of which I had a very unpleasant proof one night, and took care to guard against it afterwards; indeed, the sight of a person who should sleep with his face exposed at night would soon be utterly impaired or destroyed.[e]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SECOND.*

author,—not prob. David, as the heading

"*Sunny memories of a returning pilgrim.*"

1—5. (1) **house of the Lord,** the term is suited to the temple rather than the tabernacle. (2) **shall stand,** *lit.* have stood, and are still standing. "We stand, we pause, at the entrance of Thy gates." (3) **builded,** *etc.*, perhaps with reference to its being *rebuilt* after the exile. **compact,** with allusion to the conformation of the ground.[a] (4) **go up,** to festival. **unto the testimony,** or as a testimony, *i.e.* a custom or law. **thrones of judgment,** in this fig. the fact is indicated that Jerusalem was the centre of government, and of worship, for the whole land.[b]

*Gladness in the prospect of public worship* (*v.* 1).—Introduce by dwelling on the word gladness. Why the worship of God should produce gladness. 1. Suggestive of thoughts of God Himself; 2. Thoughts of the various manifestations of God; 3. Of the mercies of God, especially those of a personal character; 4. Of the acts and exercises of worship; 5. Of meeting God as He is not met elsewhere; 6. Of receiving special blessings from God; 7. Of the communion of saints; 8. Of enjoying privilege in the performance of duty.[c]

*The Word of God sure* (*v.* 2).—Learn that the means which God affordeth for man's good shall never return in vain; for if they further not man's salvation, they will hasten his destruction and confusion. If we be not the better for His mercies, we shall be a great deal worse. The preaching of God's Word, and all other of His ordinances, is such physic as will either kill or cure. None ever heard the one or used the other, but was thereby made either much better or much worse. The Word is called a "two-edged sword," that cuts both ways; it is either a converting or a convincing power. How should this stir us up to a zealous preparation before we come to the house of God! We return not to our homes as we came from thence, but we are one step nearer to heaven or to hell.[d]

6—9. (6) **peace,** the sign of prosperity; or, "Give hearty salutation to Jerusalem."[a] There may be a designed reference to Jerusalem, as containing in its name the word *Salem*, or peace.[b] **they shall,** better rendered as a prayer—May they prosper. (7) **walls,** thy vallum; thy wall and trench round it—thy bulwarks. **palaces,** comp. Ps. xlviii. 13. (8) **brethren and companions,** the people at large; or, the "compatriots whom the pilgrim leaves within the city walls."[c] **house,** or temple.

*Prayer for the Church* (*v.* 6).—I. Discuss the duty here inculcated. 1. The pious exercise which is here enjoined; 2. The

*a* "Those deep ravines wh. separate Jerus. fr. the rocky plateau of wh. it forms a part, acted as its natural defence, but must also have determined its natural boundaries. The expression of *compactness* was still more appropriate to the original city if, as seems probable, the valley of Tyropean formed in earlier times a fosse within a fosse, shutting in Zion and Moriah into one compact mass, not more than half a mile in breadth."—*Dean Stanley.*

*b* Dc. xvii. 8, 9.

*c S. Martin.*

*d N. Rogers* (1630).

*a Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* "The alliteration and play upon the words peace, Jerusalem, prosperity, cannot be preserved."—*Spk. Com.*

*c* "Although he is now again far from Jerus., after

subject to which it is directed; 3. The object proposed. II. Assign a few reasons for the prompt performance of this duty. 1. Gratitude; 2. Obligation; 3. Consistency of character; 4. Personal interest. Apply:—(1) Examination in regard to the past; (2) Diligence in regard to the future.[d]—*To the Church of God* (*v.* 6).—I. The specified object of pious affection. 1. Uniformity of character; 2. Exhibition of Divine perfections; 3. Security of the Church; 4. Its prosperity and glory. II. The distinguishing evidences of its existence. 1. Sorrow in the time of calamity; 2. Joy in the day of prosperity; 3. Zeal to promote the interests of the Church. III. The declared advantage resulting from it: "they shall prosper." This requires—1. Qualification; 2. Explanation.[e]

*Psalms of degrees.*—This is the title of fifteen Psalms, from cxx. to the cxxxiv. inclusive. They are said to have been composed on the ascent or deliverance of the Jews from Babylon, which, with respect to Jerusalem, was situated in a plain. And though one of them is ascribed to David, and another to Solomon, yet these might be used on this occasion, as suitable to it. Some say the name denotes that these Psalms were sung as the people ascended the steps of the temple, which they say were fifteen in number. Where were these fifteen steps? Others, that it indicates that the Psalms were sung while the smoke of the burnt sacrifice was ascending towards heaven. Most probably the title is nothing more than a musical direction to the temple choir.[f]

d Ne. ii. 19, iv. 4.

*v.* 2. *Dr. R. Holdsworth, The Valley of Vision*, 379.

*v.* 3. *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 234.

e *Ibid.*

*v.* 6. *Dr. R. Lucas*, ii. 175; *T. Boston*, iv. 488; *J. Barker*, ii. 314; *I. Priest*, 220; *Abp. Secker*, viii. 177; *Bp. Sherlock*, iii. 358; *J. Logan*, 360; *J. Boucher*, 22; *Bp. Kaye*, 177.

*vv.* 6, 7. *Abp. Laud*, i. 1; *Bp. Cosin*, i. 106; *J. Boyse*, i. 371; *Dr. W. Adams*, 221; *J. R. Boutlier*, iv. 383.

f *S. Green.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-THIRD.*

author,—unknown: date, poss. that indicated in Nehemiah ii. 19, iv. 1—4.

*Prayer for Divine aid in distress.*

**1—4.** (1) **lift . . eyes**, as Ps. cxxi. 1.[a] **in the heavens**, and so art unmoved by the excitements and troubles of men. Thou art above all and dost control. (2) **unto the hand**, Easterns prefer silence, and often indicate their wishes merely by movements of the hand. (3) **exceedingly filled**, or "has long been filled."[b] (4) **proud**, or arrogant ones. Self-complacent ones, who disregard God's law.

*Waiting upon the Lord.*—A traveller says:—"I have seen a fine illustration of this passage in a gentleman's house at Damascus. The people of the East do not speak so much or so quick as those in the West, and a sign of the hand is frequently the only instructions given to the servants in waiting. As soon as we were introduced and seated on the divan, a wave of the master's hand indicated that sherbet was to be served. Another wave brought coffee and pipes; another brought sweetmeats. At another signal dinner was made ready. The attendants watched their master's eye and hand, to know his will and do it instantly." Such is the attention with which we ought to wait upon the Lord, anxious to fulfil His holy pleasure—our great desire being, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" An equally pointed and more homely illustration may be seen any day, on our own river Thames, or in any of our large seaport towns, where the call-boy watches attentively the hand of the captain of the boats, and conveys his will to the engine-men.[c]

a "This is a deep sigh of a pained heart, wh. looks round on all sides, and seeks friends, protectors, and comforters, but can find none. Therefore it says, I come to Thee, O my God."—*Luther.*

b Ne. ii. 19, iv. 4.

c *Sunday at Home.*

author,—unknown: date, prob. post-exilic

*Praise to the Deliverer from peril.*

*a* Comp. Nu. xvi. 32, 33.

"Here, however, the poet rather compares the enemy to a furious beast whose jaws are opened wide to swallow his prey."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Ps. xciii. 3.

*vv.* 1—3. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 257.

*c R. T. S.*

"The willow which bends to the tempest often escapes better than the oak which resists it; and so, in great calamities, it sometimes happens that light and frivolous spirits recover their elasticity and presence of mind sooner than those of a lofty character."—*Sir Walter Scott.*

*a* Illus. by Nehemiah's experiences. Ne. iv. 1—23, vii. 1—19.

*b* "Complete escape is indicated by the breaking of the net."—*Fausset.*

*c Dr. Thomas.*

*v.* 6. *W. Buswell*, 133; *Dr. N. Brady*, iii. 252.

*v.* 7. *Dr. T. Taylor*, ii. 48; *J. W. Wicke*, 65; *Dr. G. E. Biber*, 207.

*v.* 8. *Dr. R. Lucas*, ii. 245; *R. W. Dibdin*, 133.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOURTH.*

1—5. (1) the Lord, or Jehovah. on our side, so ready to help us in a time of exceeding need. (2) rose up, in active efforts to destroy us. (3) swallowed, *see* Ps. lv. 15; Pr. i. 12.[a] quick, *i.e.* alive. (4) waters, comp. fig. in Ps. cxliv. 7. stream, swollen mountain stream. (5) proud waters, the added epithet denotes the insolence of the enemies.[b]

*Providence.*—David Zeisberger was travelling with several Christian Indians, to form a missionary station. The whole company had nearly lost their lives by the carelessness of a traveller who slept in the same apartment with them, at a place where they stopped in the course of their journey. In this apartment were several barrels of gunpowder, some of which were open, and grains of the powder were scattered among the loose straw on the floor, which formed their bed. The host expostulated with the traveller on the danger of admitting a candle into the apartment; but, on a promise to use the utmost caution, he at length yielded to his entreaties. The missionaries repeated their exhortations about the candle, till, overcome with fatigue, they lay down and fell asleep. Being overpowerd with weariness, the traveller, before he had extinguished the light, fell asleep also. In the morning, Zeisberger called one of the brethren out of the house into the wood, took the candle from his pocket, and imparted to him what he feared it would too much shock his hospitable host to relate in his presence. "My brother," said he "had we not had the eye of Him upon us who never slumbereth nor sleepeth, we should all have, this night, been precipitated into eternity, and no one would have known how it happened. I slept soundly, being extremely fatigued; and was in my first sleep, when I felt as if some one roused me. I sat up, and saw the wick of the candle hanging down on one side, in a flame, and on the point of falling into the straw, which I was just in time to prevent. I could not fall asleep again; but lay awake, silently thanking the Lord for the extraordinary preservation we had experienced."[c]

6—8. (6) prey, recurring to the fig. of the wild beast, as *v.* 3.[a] (7) as a bird, Ps. lxxxiv. 3; Pr. i. 17, vi. 5. we are escaped,[b] the original expresses the deep joy felt at the escape. (8) made . . earth, Ps. cxxi. 2, cxxxiv. 3.

*Soul manumission* (*v.* 7).—These words may be legitimately used to illustrate the manumission of a soul by the Gospel of truth, and suggest two remarks. I. It is liberation from a miserable bondage. 1. It is a bondage of a man himself: 2. It is a bondage associated with a sense of guilt; 3. It is a bondage from which God can alone deliver. II. It is a liberation into a happy freedom.[c]

*The Spanish Armada.*—When the Spaniards, on the defeat of their Invincible Armada, stung with disappointment, and wishing to detract from the honour which our brave defenders had acquired, exclaimed that the English had little reason to boast—for if the elements had not fought against them, they would certainly have conquered us—the enlarged and vivid mind of Queen Elizabeth improved the hint. She commanded a medal

to be struck, representing the armada scattered and sinking in the background, and in the front the British fleet riding triumphant, with the following passage as a motto round the medal: "Thou didst blow with Thy wind, and the sea covered them." It becomes us to say in reference to this, as well as many other national deliverances, "Blessed be the Lord, who hath not given us as a prey to their teeth."[d]

"When Faith would lay hold on the promises, Satan rappeth her on the fingers, as it were, and seeks to beat her off."—*Trapp.*

*d Cheever.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIFTH.*

author,—unknown: date, as prev. Ps.

*Jehovah the defence of His people.*

1—5. (1) **mount Zion**, the emblem of permanency. The mountain itself stands firm; and it is girdled by a wall of mountains. **abideth**, standeth fast: lit. *sitteth.*[a] (2) **round about**, not strictly true that Jerus. is encircled by higher hills, but poetically true that mountains form a bulwark about her.[b] Jerusalem is actually shut in by mountains only on the eastern side. (3) **rod**, *etc.*, reference is prob. to "the Persian rule under favour of wh. the Samaritans and others annoyed the Jews."[c] **lot**, *etc.*, the possession of the nation. "Godless domination over the land of Israel shall not be permitted to last." **lest . . iniquity**, be tempted to apostasy. (4) **do good**, *i.e.* do it quickly. (5) **turned aside**, lit. *bend their crooked paths.* **peace . . Israel**, rend. as expression of a wish and prayer.

*The security of the Church* (*v.* 2).—We shall consider the text—I. As relating to the Church as a whole. 1. Persecution has sought to fell the Church; 2. Evil reports have done their worst; 3. Heresy; 4. Pride. II. The fact which relates to the Church includes in it every member of the Church.[d]

*The mountains round Jerusalem.*—We rode on, hour after hour, amid increasing desolation. The latter part of the way lies over a succession of mountainous ridges, where there is no regular road, but the horses clamber up the best way they can, sometimes over smooth slabs of stone, and sometimes through heaps of loose stones. My impatience to see the holy city increased every hour. As we climbed up each side, I expected that from its summit I should see Jerusalem; but I was doomed to many disappointments, as summit after summit only gave to view another range of hills to be surmounted. It forcibly reminded me of the journey to the heavenly Jerusalem, which is a steep and difficult path, presenting one mountain after another to be overcome; but we know that at last we shall reach the city of God, and should not the certainty of that reconcile us to all the difficulties of the way? While on this tedious journey I was made fully to understand the comparison of the Psalmist.[e]

*a* Ps. xciii. 1, civ. 5.

*b* Dean Stanley thinks the reference may be to the more distant hills of Nebi Samwil, El Ram, and Tel el Fulil.

Comp. fig. in Zec. ii. 4, 5.

*c* "The Sam. contrived to gain over a considerable part, and that the most influential part, of the Jews to their side. The fear was, as the next clause shows, lest in this state of things the defection should spread still more widely."—*Perowne.*

*d C. H. Spurgeon.*

*e R. H. Herschell.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-SIXTH.*

author,—unknown: date, as prev. Ps.

*Thanksgiving for return fr. captivity.*

1—3. (1) **turned**, *etc.*, *i.e.* changed the captivity of Zion to freedom. **dream**, could not at once receive such joyful news as true.[a] (2) **singing**, Heb. *rinnâh*, a joyful cry. **they . . heathen**, *i.e.* some of the heathen. **done great things**, as prophesied, Joel ii. 21. (3) **for us**, or for them, as *v.* 2.

*Great things* (*v.* 3).—I. The Lord's work acknowledged. II. Its greatness recognised. 1. Greater things than we deserved;

*a* "When the edict of Cyrus went forth allow-

ing the captives to return, it was so unexpected, so miraculous, that we deemed the accomplishment of ancient prophecy (Jer. xxv. 12, xxix. 10) a dream."—*Spk. Com.*
"It is more prob. that the poet means to say that the incredible joy of release made the restored captives feel as if they were in a blissful dream."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* *B.D. in Study.*

*v.* 1. *P. Goodwin*, i.; *E. Cassell*, 235; *J. Gaskin*, 78.
*vv.* 1—4. *Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 223; *A. Morus*, i. 623.
*v.* 3. *Dr. T. Taylor*, ii. 83; *Bp. Hoadly*, iii. 632; *Bp. Hobart*, ii. 1.
*c* *Percy Anec.*

*a* "The streams of the returning population of Israel, wh. had been frozen up in the north, and congealed in the long winter of their captivity, and were thawed by the genial ray of God's mercy, and flowed back in vernal joy, with soft breezes and brisk buoyant waves, to replenish the dry channels of their ancient homes, and to refresh the whole region with prosperity."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* For contrast of sowing and reaping, see Hag. ii. 3—9, 17—19.

*c* "The rhythm of the original in *v.* 6 is noticeable. The slow, sad motion of the sower going forth to his work of sorrowful

2. Than we knew: 3. Than we expected. III. An interest therein claimed. IV. Joyful gladness expressed. 1. Why are we glad? the work is so great, is done, done well; 2. How should we show our gladness? cheerful countenance, willing labour, generous gifts. Apply:—(1) Has the Lord done aught for you? (2) Have you acknowledged His hand? (3) What are you expecting in the future?[b]

*Malicious interpretation.*—Mr. Symmons, an ejected minister in the time of the Commonwealth, gives a singular account of the accusations made against him by Parliament, before whom he was summoned. "When I preached against treason, rebellion, and disobedience," says he, "then they said no question but I meant Parliament; and afterwards, when I preached against lying, slandering, and malice, this, they said, was against the Parliament too; and got me to be sent for up again by a pursuivant about the same. Nay, when I did but quote those words of our Saviour, "Wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth unto death, and many go therein," this, they said, was against the Parliament, because the major part of the people in those parts were for the same. When I quoted that passage in the 120th Psalm, where David says that "he was for peace, but others were for war; when he spake of that, they made them ready for battle;" this, they said, was for the king, and against the Parliament. When I preached against vainglory, upon those words of our Saviour, "I seek not the praise of men," they said I preached against a particular member, when I protest I never thought of him all the while I was upon that subject (that I know of), save only when I prayed for my enemies."[c]

**4—6.** (4) **turn . . captivity,** restore those of us who are still captives. "The poet prays for those who have not yet returned to their country." **as the streams,** wh. are restored and filled with the heavy rains. **south,** *i.e.* the *Negeb*, or southern part of the country.[a] (5) **sow in tears,** indicating the anxiety of the returned exiles, who would have to sow the very corn on wh. they should subsist. **in joy,** or with shoutings of a joyous harvest home.[b] (6) **weepeth,** at every step, because he must cast in all the store. **precious seed,** better, a handful of seed.[c] "The quantity of the seed a sower draws, or trails along,[d] at one time."

*Tears and joy* (*v.* 5).—All the glorious harvests which gladden us were sown in tears—open Bible, religious liberty. I. Show who may be assured of a joyful reaping after a sad spring-time. 1. The true penitent; 2. The labourer for God; 3. The afflicted saint; 4. The tempted and tried believer. II. Show that a tearful sowing is itself a sign of a joyful reaping. 1. Those will be concerned to select the best seed; 2. They will be assiduous and diligent in the sowing; 3. They will be constantly desiring the reaping. III. Remember the Great Sower.[e]

*A patient teacher's reward* (*v.* 5).—Many years ago, in the class of a faithful Sabbath-school teacher, were two boys who caused much trouble by their bad behaviour. They were the worst boys in school, and several times the superintendent came to the teacher and said he feared he should be obliged to expel them from the school; but the teacher, feeling how much they needed the instruction and restraint of the Sabbath school, and fearing that they would run to every excess of riot when no longer under its

influence, would plead that they might be allowed to remain a little longer. The boys did remain, and for many years attended the school. The good seed, sown with tears and prayers, yielded at last an abundant harvest. Both of the boys gave their hearts to the Saviour, and both devoted themselves to the work of the ministry, and proved themselves workmen that needed not to be ashamed.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED & TWENTY-SEVENTH.*

**1—5.** (1) **build the house,** or found the family.[a] **waketh,** *i.e.* keepeth awake to watch.[b] (2) **sit up late,** so artificially lengthening the natural day, in order to do more work. **bread of sorrows,** *i.e.* of wearisome and exhausting labours. **so,** just as certainly; nay, more surely. "Thus giveth He to His beloved, even in sleep."[c] (3) **heritage,** *etc.*, His special gift, a possession.[d] (4) **children of the youth,** *i.e.* born in his early manhood.[e] (5) **quiver full,** the symbol of abundant resources for the battle-field of life. **speak . . gate,** nobly defending their father's cause.

*Labour and rest* (*vv.* 1. 2).—Two subjects for meditation. I. Labour without God. 1. The possibility of working without God; 2. The fruitlessness of working without God. II. Repose from God. 1. Repose is a generally recognised blessing; 2. The repose of the true worker is a special blessing.[f]

*God acknowledged.*—It is the custom, in the valleys of the canton of Berne, whenever the father of a family builds a house, and the walls are raised to their full height, to request the minister of the parish to pray to God inside. The workmen, and such as are to assist in finishing the house, meet together and unite in thanking the Lord for His care hitherto, and entreat a continuance of it through the more dangerous part that remains. "This prayer," observes M. Paulet, the pastor of Coutelary, "when made in faith, redoubles one's strength, and removes all fear of danger." "If God be for us, who can be against us?" observed an old carpenter to this same minister, when he advised him not to expose himself too incautiously. A blessing terminates this pious ceremony; the pastor retires, the workmen return to their labours, and the noise of hammers begins to be heard again.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-EIGHTH.*

**1—3.** (1) **blessed is,** as Ps. i. 1. **feareth . . walketh,** "abstains fr. breaches of the prohibitory commandments of the Decalogue, and performs the positive ones."[a] (2) **labour,** *i.e.* the fruit of thy labour.[b] **happy,** in circumstances. (3) **by the sides,** *lit.* in the innermost chambers. Women's apartments in the Eastern house are separate and secluded. The vine is the usual emblem of fruitfulness. The sap in the small stem is unusually full and rich, and the fruitage very abundant. **olive plants,** the emblem of vigorous, healthy, joyous life.[c]

*Children olive plants.*—"Follow me," says a recent traveller in Palestine, "into the grove, and I will show you what may have suggested the comparison. Here we have hit upon a beautiful illustration. This aged and decayed tree is surrounded, as you

anticipation, is contrasted with his quick glad return, bearing his sheaves."—*Spk. Com.*

*d* Am. ix. 13.

*e Stems and Twigs.*

**author,—unknown: date, as prev. Ps.**

*God's blessing alone brings prosperity.*

*a* De. xxv. 9; 1 Sa. ii. 35.

*b* Ps. cxxi. 3, 4.

*c Delitzsch.*

*d* "It must be remembered that by Orientals abundant offspring, and esp. male offspring, is regarded as the chief of blessings."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*e* "Such would naturally grow up a comfort and protection to their father in his old age."—*Peroune.*

*f Dr. Thomas.*

*v.* 1. *W. Leighton,* 257; *Dr. R. Munkhouse,* i. 137; *C. Girdlestone,* iii 217.

**author,—unknown: date, as prev. Ps.**

*The domestic blessings of the true worshipper of God.*

*a* So the Rabbis, *Ab. Ezra* and *Kimchi* explain the passage.

*b* Le. xxvi. 16; De xxviii. 33; see also Hag. i. 11, ii. 17.

*c* "The similitude in the text is taken fr. a mul-

titude of young olive shoots clustering round the parent tree.' — *Spk. Com., Thomson.*

v. 3. *Bp. King*, 282.

*d Dr. Dunn.*

*a* Ps. iii. 4, xiv. 7, xx. 2, cxxxiv. 3.

*b Peroune.*

*c* "Long life crowns all other temporal favours."—*Fausset.*

*vv.* 5, 6. *Bp. Secker*, v. 287.

*d Cheever.*

see, by several young and thrifty shoots, which spring from the roots of the venerable parent. They seem to uphold, protect, and embrace it. We may even fancy that they now bear that load of fruit which would otherwise be demanded of the feeble parent. Thus do good and affectionate children gather round the table of the righteous. Each contributes something to the common wealth and welfare of the whole,—a beautiful sight, with which may God refresh the eyes of every friend of mine."[d]

4—6. (4) **thus**, *i.e.* thus variously and abundantly, in labour and in home. (5) **out of Zion**, regarded as the earthly dwelling-place and throne of God.[a] **thou shalt see**, better rend. as a wish, "Mayest thou look upon." "The welfare of the family and the welfare of the State are indissolubly connected."[b] (6) **children's children**, sometimes even to the fourth generation.[c] **peace**, *etc.*, as close of Ps. cxxv.

*The warrior playing with his children.*—The warlike Agesilaus was, within the walls of his own house, one of the most tender and playful of men. He used to join with his children in all their innocent gambols, and was once discovered by a friend showing them how to ride upon a hobby-horse. When his friend expressed some surprise at beholding the great Agesilaus so employed, "Wait," said the hero, "till you are yourself a father, and if you then blame me, I give you liberty to proclaim this act of mine to all the world."[d]

**author,— unknown: date, as prev. Ps.**

*The cry of the persecuted nation.*

*a* Is. xlvii. 12—15; Je. ii. 2, iii. 25; Ho. ii. 15, xi. 1.

*b* "The enemies having tried all ways, still never accomplished their purposes, bec. God disappointed their hopes, and baffled their attempts."—*Calvin.*

*c* "The lashes inflicted upon the back of the writhing slave by a cruel master are compared to the long furrows pierced in the passive earth by the share of the plougher."—*Spk. Com.* Comp. figs. in Is. i. 6, ii. 23.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-NINTH.*

1—4. (1) **many a time**, marg. *much*, or *grievously*. **afflicted me**, or have been adversaries to me. **youth**, the period spent in Egyptian bondage was so regarded.[a] (2) **not prevailed**, this is the point of the Ps.[b] (3) **plowers**, *etc.*, ploughing is made a fig. of scourging.[c] See another use of the fig. in Mi. iii. 12; Je. xxvi. 18. (4) **cords**, by wh. the wearied steer was yoked to the plough. Cord is general image of slavery.

*Affliction.*—A negro named Robert, a sugar-boiler, was dreadfully afflicted for several years; his affliction arose, as was supposed, from a drop of boiling sugar falling on his arm when he was at work. The place broke out, and the sore spread, so that his fingers fell off. The disorder ascended into his head, and his eyes fell out, as also pieces of his skull. Yet he bore all this with remarkable patience, and at times rejoiced in the hope of being removed to that place where there is no death, neither sorrow nor crying. "The last time I visited him," said his minister, "I could not bear to look upon him, but only talked to and prayed with him at his chamber door. When I asked him how he was, he said he was just waiting the Lord's time, when He should please to call for him. 'Massa,' said he, 'two hands gone; two eyes gone; two feet gone: no more dis carcase here. Oh, massa! de pain sometimes too strong for me; I am obliged to cry out, and pray to the Lord for His assistance.'" When he came to close his life, he exhorted all about him to be sure to live to God; and especially his wife, who had remained with him all the time of his affliction—a very rare circumstance then with

negroes. But she continued faithful; and he died happy, exhorting her to live to God.[d]

5—8. (5) let them, or prophetically. they will be. Zion, the seat of Jehovah. (6) grass . . housetops, "on ill-compacted flat Eastern roofs grass is often found springing into a short-lived existence."[a] Such grass withers prematurely for lack of root. (7) mower, *etc.*, no harvest of such growths is to be gathered. (8) go by say, using the customary salute to the reapers—"The Lord be with you:" as Ru. ii. 4.

*Grass on the house-tops.*—At Anata, the Anathoth of Scripture, I observed that the roofs of some of the houses were partially covered with grass—a circumstance which I noticed also in several other places. As the roofs of the common dwellings are flat, and, instead of being built of stone or wood, are coated with plaster or hardened earth, a slight crop of grass frequently springs up in that situation. Such vegetation, however, having no soil into which it can strike its roots, and being exposed to a scorching sun, rarely attains to any great height, or continues long; it is a feeble, stunted product, and soon withers away. Hence the sacred writers sometimes allude to the grass on the house-tops as an emblem of weakness, frailty, and certain destruction. Thus, Psalm cxxix. 6, 7, and Isaiah xxxvii. 27. The master of the house had laid in a stock of earth, which was carried up and spread evenly on the roof. The roof is thus formed of mere earth, laid on and rolled hard and flat. On the top of every house is a large stone roller for the purpose of hardening and flattening this layer of rude soil, so that the rain may not penetrate; but upon this surface, as may be supposed, grass and weeds grow freely. It is to such grass that the Psalmist alludes as useless and bad.[b]

*d Whitecross.*

*a Smith's Bib. Dict.*

*v.* 8. *Bp. Cosin*, i. 190.

"As the man of pleasure, by a vain attempt to be more happy than any man can be, is often more miserable than most men are; so the sceptic, in a vain attempt to be wise beyond what is permitted to man, plunges into a darkness more deplorable, and a blindness more incurable, than the common herd whom he despises, and would fain instruct."—*Colton.*

*b Jowett.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTIETH.*

author,—unknown: date as prev. Ps.

*A cry to God for the forgiveness of sin.*

1—4. (1) depths, of misery and sorrow:[a] deep waters of overwhelming affliction. (2) Lord, Heb. *Adonai*, or Sovereign Lord. (3) mark,[b] strictly watch, and keep in memory in order to punish. shall stand, *i.e.* to endure Thy presence.[c] (4) but, *etc.*, before this *v.* we require such a sentence as, "Away with such dark anticipation, for:" or, "But thou dost not mark them, for." forgiveness, lit. *the forgiveness*, or just that wh. man needs. feared, with thankful, loving fear.

*Not justice, but pardon.*—In the days when the first Napoleon was Consul of France, a well-dressed girl of fourteen years of age presented herself, alone, at the gate of the palace. By tears and entreaties she moved the kind-hearted porter to allow her to enter. Passing from one room to another, she found her way to the hall through which Napoleon with his officers was to pass. When he appeared, she cast herself at his feet, and in the most earnest and moving manner cried, "Pardon, sire! pardon for my father!" "And who is your father?" asked Napoleon. "And who are you?" "My name is Lajolia," she said; and with flowing tears added, "but, sire, my father is doomed to die." "Ah! young lady," replied Napoleon, "I can do nothing for you. It is the second time your father has been found guilty of treason against the State." "Alas!" exclaimed the poor girl, "I

*a* Ps. lxix. 2, 14. *b* Job x. 14, xiv. 16, 17; Ps. xc. 8. *c* "The image seems, in the first instance, drawn from a flight in battle before a too-powerful foe."—*Syk. Com.* Am. ii. 15; Na. i. 6; Mal. iii. 2. "Such is the composition of this excellent prayer, which, thus compounded, like a pillar of aromatic smoke from myrrh, frankincense,

and every other most fragrant perfume, ascends grateful to the throne of God." —*Abp. Leighton.*
*d Wayside Books.*

*a* "There are some who, instead of waiting for God, His time, His way, His help, take upon themselves to decide for Him, how, when, and in what degree, He shall aid. This is not to wait for Him; it is to make God wait upon them, and aid them as they define the way."—*Luther.*

*b* "*Chr. A. Crusius*, when on his death-bed, with hands and eyes uplifted to heaven, joyfully exclaimed, 'My soul is full of the mercy of Jesus Christ. *My whole soul is towards God.*'"—*Delitzsch.*
*c J. Bunyan.*
*d T. W. Aveling.*

anthor,—poss. David

*A Ps. of child-like resignation to God.*

*a* Ps. xviii. 27, ci. 5.
*b* "The poet sets before them the example of a pattern Israelite, and appeals to them generally to attain conformity to that pattern by grasping supermundane hopes." —*Jennings and Lowe.*
"To be nameless in worthy deeds exceeds our in-

know it, sire; but I do not ask for justice, I implore pardon. I beseech you, forgive, oh, forgive my father!" Napoleon's lips trembled, and his eyes filled with tears. After a momentary struggle of feeling, he gently took the hand of the young maiden, and said, "Well, my child, for your sake I will pardon your father. That is enough. Now leave me."[d]

5—8. (5) his word, of gracious promise,[a] in . . hope, better "for His word do I tarry;" *i.e.* for the fulfilment of it. (6) watch . . morning,[b] as do sentinels, and sleepless sufferers. (7) mercy, lit. *the mercy*, that wh. is so characteristic of God. (8) he, on this word emphasis lies. his iniquities, chiefly the punishments and penalties following upon them.

*Israel's hope encouraged* (*v.* 7).—I. An exhortation. II. The reason for that exhortation. III. An amplification of that reason. Apply:—1. How sad our state by sin; 2. No rest but in Christ; 3. Do nothing in worship but as led to Christ; 4. Hold fast your profession; 5. Take heed of offence at the Word; 6. Plenteous redemption—let Israel hope; 7. Doth not thy heart long after mercy?[c]

*Watching for the morning.*—In the year 1830, on the night preceding the 1st of August, the day the slaves in our West Indian colonies were to come into possession of the freedom promised them, many of them, we are told, never went to bed at all. Thousands and tens of thousands of them assembled in their places of worship, engaging in devotional duties, and singing praises to God, waiting for the first streak of the light of the morning of that day on which they were to be made free. Some of their number were sent to the hills, from which they might obtain the first view of the coming day, and by a signal intimate to their brethren down in the valley the dawn of that day that was to make them men, and no longer, as they had hitherto been, mere goods and chattels—men with souls that God had created to live for ever. How eagerly must these men have watched for the morning.[d]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIRST.*

1—3. (1) not haughty, humility is properly regarded as the crown of the virtues. lofty, lifted up.[a] Pride, being in the heart, finds expression in the uplifted attitude. things too high, involving powers beyond any I possessed. (2) child . . weaned, one that has ceased fretting after its mother's milk, and lies beside her peaceful and satisfied. (3) let Israel, better, "O Israel, hope thou."[b]

*From what we need to be weaned* (*v.* 2).—I. What those things are from which we ought to be weaned. 1. Pleasure; 2. Riches; 3. Reputation; 4. Everything that may not be improved to the glory of God. II. What methods God uses to wean us from them. 1. He embitters these earthly things to us: 2. Withdraws them from us; 3. Gives us something more suitable. Address—(1) Those whose hearts are set on the world: (2) Those who are disconsolate on account of their troubles; (3) Those who feel a measure of David's spirit.

*Returning to God.*—Forgiveness invites us to return to God, obliges us to return to God, and take it as God dispenseth it; it

inclines us to return to God, and encourages us to live in a state of amity and holy friendship with God, pleasing and serving Him in righteousness and holiness all our days. Man stands aloof from a condemning God, but he may be induced to submit to a pardoning God: and it obligeth us to return to God, to serve, and love, and please Him who will forgive so great a debt, and discharge us from all our sins; for she loved much, to whom much was forgiven. It inclines us to serve and please God: for where God pardons He renews; He puts a new life into us, that inclines us to God.[c]

famous history." —*Sir Thomas Browne.*

*v.* 2. *T. Boston*, ix. 45; *C. Bradley*, i. 313; *A. B. Evans*, 153.

*vv.* 2, 3. 33.

*c T. Manton.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SECOND.*

author,—poss. David

*Prayer for the house of God and house of David.*

1—5. (1) remember, with a view to fulfilling Thy promise to him. afflictions, here especially his *solicitude* concerning building of God's house.[a] (2) sware, or firmly resolved: as 2 Sa. vii. 1—3. mighty . . Jacob, comp. Ge. xlix. 24.[b] (3) tabernacle . . house, lit. *my tent-dwelling*:[c] used figuratively for his house, wh. was of cedar. my bed, more precisely, "into the bed, (wh. is) my couch."[d] (4) sleep, *etc.*, Ps. vi. 4.[e] (5) habitation, settled resting-place.

*State beds in the East.*—From the expression of the Psalmist it would seem that a lofty bed was not only a necessary luxury, but a sign of superior rank. This idea was very prevalent in the period of the revival of the arts on the Continent, where the state bed, often six feet high, always stood on a dias in an alcove, richly curtained off from the saloon (see the Designs of J. Le Pavtre, 3, fol. 1751). In the East the same custom still continues, and a verse in the Koran declares it to be one of the delights of the faithful in paradise that "they shall repose themselves on lofty beds" (Cap. 56, "The Inevitable"). Frequently these state beds were composed of the most costly and magnificent materials. The prophet Amos speaks of ivory beds (Amos vi. 4); Nero had a golden one; that of the Mogul Aurungzeebe was jewelled; and, lastly, in the privy purse expenses of our own profligate Charles II., we read of a "silver bedstead for Mrs. Gwynn." And to this day the state bedsteads in the viceregal palace at Cairo are executed in the same metal, and are supposed to have cost upwards of £3,000 each.

*a* 1 Chr. xxii. 14.

*b* Only found in three other passages. Is. i. 24, xlix. 26, lx. 16.

*c* "A good instance of the way in wh. the associations of the old patriarchal tent-life fixed themselves in the language of the people."—*Perowne.*

*d* Comp. Ge. xlix. 4.

*e* "Neither the temples of my head to take any rest."—*Fr. Bk Vers.*

*Bourdaloue*, i. 309; *J. Boys*, 821.

*v.* 2. *J. Weemse*, i. 188.

*vv.* 3—5. *C. W. Le Bas*, i. 361.

6—10. (6) at Ephratah, or Ephrath, one of the names of Bethlehem.[a] That the ark was even temporarily settled at Bethlehem we have no record. The point of the Psalmist is that at the time referred to the ark had no fixed abode. fields of the woods, this trans. the name of the town *Kirjath-jearim*. (7) tabernacles, on Mt. Zion. footstool,[b] as Jehovah dwells above, the cover of the ark is regarded as His footstool. (8) arise, *etc.*, the usual cry on moving the ark.[c] (9) righteousness, white clothing as the symbol of righteousness.[d] saints, chosen people, Thy beloved. (10) turn . . face, the sign of rejecting a petition.

*Forgiveness.*—A young man, who afterwards became a minister, being under serious impressions, came to Dr. Owen for counsel. In the course of conversation the doctor asked, "Pray, in what manner do you think to go to God?" "Through the Mediator,

*a* Ge. xxxv. 19; Ru. iv. 11; Mi. v. 2.

But Ephrathi equally means an Ephraimite, and therefore the location of the ark at Shiloh, in Ephraim, may be meant.

*b* Ps. xcix. 5.

*c* Nu. x. 35, 36; Ps. lxviii. 1.

*Hupfeld* takes Ephratah to represent Beth-Shemesh, where the ark was first

removed by the Philistines.
*d* "Fitting attire, figuring the inner still more glorious attire, wh. they should wear, of holiness and obedience to Him whom they serve."—*Spk. Com.*
*v.* 7. *J. Mede*, i. 500; *Bp. Dehon*, i. 220.
*v.* 9. *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 252; *Superville*, i. 164.

*a* Ps. xlviii. 1, 2.
*b G. Brooks.*

*vv.* 14—16. *J. Whitty*, ii. 435.
"The promises which God hath made are a full storehouse of all kinds of blessings — they include in them both the upper and nether springs, the mercies of this life and of that which is to come: there is no good that can present itself as an object to our desires or thoughts, of which the promises are not a ground for faith to believe and hope to expect the enjoyment of."—*Spurstowe.*

*c J. Taylor.*
*a* "Literally, this was fulfilled in the days of the restoration of Israel, by the zeal of Nehemiah, who exerted himself for the adequate provision of offerings for the temple, and for the maintenance of the priesthood. See Ne. x. 32—39."—*Wordsworth.*
*b* 1 Sa. ii. 1.

sir," said the young man. To which Dr. Owen replied, "That is easily said; but it is another thing to go to God through the Mediator than what many who use the expression are aware of. I myself preached some years when I had but very little, if any, experimental acquaintance with access to God through Christ, until the Lord was pleased to visit me with sore affliction, by which I was brought to the month of the grave, and under which my soul was oppressed with horror and darkness. But God graciously relieved my spirit by a powerful application of Psalm cxxx. 4: 'There is forgiveness with Thee, that Thou mayest be feared;' from whence I received special instruction, peace, and comfort in drawing near to God through the Mediator, and I preached thereupon after my recovery."

11—14. (11) **sworn**, *etc.*, 2 Sa. vii. 12—16. **fruit .. throne**, an important promise to Dav. seeing that Saul, his predecessor, left no family to reign. (12) **if**, *etc.*, all the Lord's promises are conditional on the faithfulness of His people. **for evermore**, obs. how this expression in the Heb. equals "for a long time." (13) **chosen Zion**,[a] the term Zion is evidently used as including the district of Jerusalem. "The religious and political centres are regarded as one and the same." (14) **rest**, resting-place for my symbol, the ark.

*Zion a type of the Church* (*vv.* 13—16).—I. God's delight in Zion. 1. He there dispensed His ordinances; 2. Vouchsafed His presence; 3. Communicated His blessings. II. God's promises to Zion—1. In respect to its institutions; 2. To its ministers; 3. All its worshippers. Infer—(1) That formalists do not belong to the Church; (2) That the Church cannot be overthrown; (3) That Christians are bound to serve and honour God.[b]

*Love of children.*—No man can tell but he that loves his children, how many delicious accents make a man's heart dance in the pretty conversation of those dear pledges: their childishness, their stammering, their little angers, their innocence, their imperfections, their necessities, are so many little emanations of joy and comfort to him that delights in their persons and society; but he that loves not his wife and children, feeds a lioness at home, and broods a nest of sorrows; and blessing itself cannot make him happy; so that all the commandments of God enjoining a man to love his wife, are nothing but so many necessities and capacities of joy. She that is loved is safe, and he that loves is joyful.[c]

15—18. (15) **abundantly**, or surely,[a] **poor with bread**, a sign of national prosperity. (16) **salvation**, comp. "righteousness," *v.* 9. (17) **horn**[b] **of David**, the horn was the symbol of dominion. **to bud**, or branch forth, with reference to Dav.'s offspring. **lamp**,[c] Heb. *nîr*, which also denotes *progeny*. This sentence would be better rendered, ordained a "line of descendants." (18) **shame**, of the failure of their line of princes.

*The glory of Christ and confusion of His enemies* (*v.* 18).—I. The confusion of His enemies. II. The prosperity of His reign. 1. The settled and undisturbed title to His crown; 2. His counsels are wise; 3. His administration is just and firm; 4. His subjects are happy: 5. His power and resources are infinite; 6. His wisdom and benevolence are renowned; 7. His empire is

ancient. III. The certainty of both. Here we have—1. Degree; 2. Provision. Apply – (1) To enemies—submit; (2) To subjects—glory in your privileges, live conscientiously, endeavour to gain new subjects.

*Divine plenty.*—Instead of such lively interest, what satiety there is on the part of many! Manton says, "There is a plenty of means, even to a surfeit. Men are Gospel-glutted, Christ-glutted, and sermon-glutted; and therefore are at a very great indifferency, and under a mighty coldness as to the word of God. Usually we are more sensible of the benefit of the word in the want of it than we are in the enjoyment of it. 'The word of the Lord was precious in those days. There was no open vision.' When the public ministry of the prophets was rare and scarce, then it was precious and sweet. When the Papists denied the use of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, oh, what would we give then for a little scrap and fragment of the Word of God in English—a load of hay for a chapter in James!"

c "The lamp in the household is a common symbol of prosperity and glory. 2 Sa. xxi. 17; 1 Ki. xi. 36, xv. 4; Ps. xviii. 28. One of the daily Jewish prayers is, 'Soon may the Branch, the Root of David, spring up, and His horn be excellent.'"—*Spk. Com.*

*v.* 16. *Dr. I. Barrow*, i. 318; *Dr. T. Gibbons*, 153.

*v.* 17. *E. Erskine*, iii. 3.

*v.* 18. *Dr. T. Playfere*, 139; *J. Brougham*, ii. 157.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-THIRD.*

author and date,—uncertain

*A Psalm on brotherly love.*

1—3. (1) brethren . . unity, *Heb.* "For them who are brethren *also* to dwell together."[a] (2) precious ointment, *see* Ex. xxix. 7; Le. viii. 12, xxi. 10. The point dwelt on is the flowing of the ointment, diffusing fragrance all over the body. skirts, *etc.*, evidently the lower hem of the garments. Some think the collar or upper hem is meant. (3) dew of Hermon, dew that falls alike on both mountains, the lofty Hermon and the humble Zion. Or, "The many silver dewdrops, falling on distant mountains, and wafted onward to Zion."[b] the blessing, wh. can alone sanctify the unity.

*Mutual benediction* (*v.* 3).—Cursing is forbidden, and blessing is commanded. I. God the fountain of blessing. II. The heavens and the earth evidence of the Divine capacity to bless. III. The Church a channel of blessing. IV. The saints a means of spreading blessing, through the spirit of blessing. V. The riches involved in the Divine benediction.[c]—*The excellency of union* (*v.* 1).—I. Define the nature of Scriptural union. 1. Oneness in sentiment; 2. A point in affection; 3. Sameness of principle; 4. Oneness in effort. II. Assert its transcendent excellence. 1. Its moral fitness; 2. Its pleasing appearance; 3. Its beneficial influence. III. Specify the means of its promotion. 1. Some things to be avoided; 2. Others to be performed.[d]

*The dew of Hermon.*—We had sensible proof at Rasheiya of the copiousness of the "dew of Hermon" spoken of in Ps. cxxxiii. 3, where "Zion" is only another name for the same mountain. Unlike most other mountains, which gradually rise from lofty table-lands, and often at a distance from the sea, Hermon starts at once to the height of nearly ten thousand feet, from a platform scarcely above the sea-level. This platform, too—the upper Jordan valley, and marshes of Merom—is for the most part an impenetrable swamp of unknown depth, whence the seething vapour, under the rays of an almost tropical sun, is constantly ascending into the upper atmosphere during the day. The vapour, coming in contact with the snowy sides of the mountain,

"Touchingly must the blessings wh. the possession of one common dwelling-place brings with it have presented themselves to those who had been so long 'dispersed' among heathen nations."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b Wordsworth.*

*c S. Martin.*

*d Omicron* in 400 Sks.

*v.* 1. *W. Bridge*, ii. 433; *J. Holland*, i. 114; *Dr. T. Franklin*, iii. 159; *W. Jones*, ii. 223; *Bp. J. Thomas*, i. 19; *Dr. A. Rees*, ii. 122; *E. Berens*, 206; *J. Calthrop*, i. 241.

"How beautiful is the sight of the union of great minds, diversified though they may be in many points, and that diversity even obvious to observers."—*J. Bate.*

*c Dr. Tristram.*

is rapidly congealed, and is precipitated in the evening in the form of a dew, the most copious we ever experienced. It penetrated everywhere, and saturated everything. The floor of our tent was soaked, our bedding was covered with it, our guns were dripping, and dewdrops hung about everywhere. No wonder that the foot of Hermon is clad with orchards and gardens of such marvellous fertility in this land of droughts.[c]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FOURTH.*

author,—unknown: date, time of the second temple

*Greetings of night watchers.*

1—3. (1) by night stand, as night-watchers.[a] (2) lift . . hands, in the attitude of prayer. Watching unto prayer. in the sanctuary, or, "in holiness." Or, perhaps. turning your faces towards the sanctuary. (3) thee, or you. The exact form of the high priest's blessing seems to be taken.[b]

*Dr. Owen: an incident in his early life.*—When a young man, Dr. Owen, having been for a considerable time in distress of mind, went one Lord's-day with a cousin of his to hear Mr. Calamy, a celebrated preacher in London. From some occurrence, Mr. Calamy was prevented from preaching that day. Being uncertain whether there would be any sermon at all. Dr. Owen was solicited by his relation to go and hear another eminent minister, Mr. Jackson. Being indisposed to go farther, however, he kept his seat, resolving, if no minister came, to return to his lodgings. After waiting some time, a country minister came up to the pulpit, a stranger not only to Dr. Owen, but to the congregation, who, having prayed earnestly, took for his text Matt. viii. 26, "Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith?" The very reading of the words surprised Dr. Owen; on which he secretly put up a prayer that God would be pleased by the minister to speak to his case. And his prayer was heard: for in that sermon the minister was directed to answer those very objections which he had generally formed against himself: and though he had formerly given the same answers to himself without effect, yet now the time was come when God designed to speak peace to his soul; and the sermon (though otherwise a plain familiar discourse) was blessed for the removing of all his doubts, and laid the foundation of that solid peace and comfort which he afterwards enjoyed as long as he lived.

*a* "Three things are clear with regard to this Ps. First that it consists of a greeting, *vv.* 1, 2, and reply, *v.* 3. Next, that the greeting is addressed to those priests and Levites who had the night-watch in the temple. Lastly, that this Ps. is purposely placed at the end of the collection of Pilgrim Songs in order to take the place of a final blessing."—*Delitzsch.*

*b* Nu. vi. 24. *P. Waldo: The Te Deum and Benedicite; Lectures by Berens*, 92.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-FIFTH.*

author and date,—unknown

*A Hallelujah Ps. for temple service.*

1—5. (1) servants, so the general assemblage of worshippers is regarded. (2) ye that stand, in the attitude and place of worshippers. courts, the open spaces before the sanctuary. (3) it is pleasant, perhaps better. *He* is pleasant or lovely.[a] (4) the Lord, *etc.*, as De. vii. 6. (5) know, the language of decided personal experience.[b]

*Delitzsch* styles this Ps. a *mosaic*, bec. it is entirely made up of selected pieces fr. other Ps., and fr. the prophetical writings.

*a* Ps. liv. 6, cxlvii. 1.

*b* Ps. xcv. 3.

*Providence.*—A worthy man, formerly minister at Walton-upon-Thames, being the subject of persecution in England, in the year 1662, and apprehensive of the ascendency of popery, removed to Middleburgh, in Zealand. The little money he took with him was soon expended, and he was reduced with his family to very great want, which his modesty would not allow him to make known. In this perplexity, after he had been at prayer one morning with his family, his children asked for some bread

for their breakfast; but he having none, nor money to buy any, they all burst into tears. While they were thus sorrowing together, the door-bell was rung; Mrs. Anderson went to the door, where she was met by a man who presented a small parcel, saying it had been sent by a gentleman, and that some provision would be sent in shortly. When they opened the paper, they found it to contain forty pieces of gold. Soon afterwards a countryman arrived with a horse-load of whatever could contribute to their comfort. These supplies were continued at intervals to his dying day, without his knowing where they came from. It afterwards appeared that these kindnesses were shown by a pious merchant of Middleburgh, who observing a grave English minister frequently walk the streets with a dejected countenance, inquired privately into his circumstances, and sent him the gold by his apprentice, and the provision by his country servant, saying, "God forbid that any of Christ's ambassadors should be strangers, and we not visit them; or in distress, and we not assist them;" at the same time expressly charging them to conceal his name.[c]

"Griefe for the calamity of another is pitty, and ariseth from the imagination that the like calamity may befall himselfe; and therefore it is called compassion, or in the phrase of the present time, a fellow feeling."—*Hobbes.*

*c R. T. S.*

6—9. (6) heaven, *etc.*, terms used to compass every created thing.[a] (7) causeth, *etc.*, comp. Je. x. 13, li. 16. vapours, Heb. *things lifted up;* i.e. clouds. for the rain, to accompany rain, with its beneficent influence. out . . treasures, as Job xxxviii. 22, 23. (8) smote, *etc.*, Ex. xii. 29. (9) tokens and wonders, miraculous judgments, wh. were not mere wonders, but tokens or signs of the Divine will.[b]

*a* "The specification of Jehovah's doings according to His pleasure, in heaven, earth, the sea, and all deep places, puts before us in a graphic manner His particular care always and everywhere."—*Calvin.*

*b* Ex. v. 21, vii. 10. *v.* 6. *W. Scott, Providence,* 369; *Dr. L. Leland,* ii. 37.

*The deep places of the sea* (*v.* 6).—Captain Sir James Ross, in his voyage to the South, made some soundings; and 900 miles W. of St. Helena found the depth 5,000 fathoms = 30,000 feet = nearly $5\frac{3}{4}$ miles. Another, made in lat. 3° 5′, and long. 9° W., at 300 miles W. of Cape of Good Hope = 2,226 fathoms. Captain Denham, in S. Atlantic, between Rio de Janeiro and Cape of Good Hope, found the depth 7,706 fathoms = nearly 7·7 geographical miles. Since the highest summits of the Himalaya are little more than 28,000 feet, the sea bottom is far more below than the highest pinnacles are above its surface. According to Laplace, the average depth of the sea is from four to five miles.[c]

*c Quarterly Rev.*

10—14. (10) smote, *etc.*, De. iv. 38, vii. 2, ix. 1, etc. (11) Sihon, De. ii. 30; Nu. xxi. 21—23.[a] (12) gave their land, Jos xii. 7. (13) thy name, comp. Ex. iii. 15. (14) judge, *i.e.* vindicate His people against all oppressors. repent, *see* Ex. xxxii. 12.

*a* See also Am. ii. 9.

*Divine power.*—To raise the dead is the effect of Almighty power, but then the resurrection supposeth pre-existent matter. In the work of creation there is no pre-existent matter, but then there is no opposition: that which is not, rebels not against the power that gives it being. But victory and conquest suppose opposition, all the power of corrupt nature arming itself, and fighting against God. Let the soul whom the Father draws struggle and reluctate as much as it can; it shall come, yea, and come willingly, too, when the drawing power of God is upon it. Oh, the self-conflicts, the contrary resolves, with which the soul finds itself distracted and rent asunder! The hopes and fears, the encouragements and discouragements,—they will, and they will not! But victorious grace conquers all opposition at last.[b]

*b J. Flavel* (1699).

"If, in the ocean of life, over which we are bound to eternity, there are rocks and shoals, it is no cruelty to chart them down; it is an eminent and prominent mercy."—*Rev. Henry Ward Beecher.*

"It is not so much the gifts of the spirit, as the groans of the

spirit, that God likes. Prayer is called a wrestling and a pouring out of the soul. Prayer is compared to incense. Incense without fire makes no sweet smell: prayer without fervency is like incense without fire."—*T. Watson. a Whitecross.*

15—18. (15) idols, *etc.*, as Ps. cxv. 4. (16) mouths, *etc.*, Ps. cxv. 5. (17, 18) ears, *etc.*, Ps. cxv. 6—8.

*Gods of the heathen.*—When Mr. Medhurst resided in Penang, a Chinese came to him for medicine, who said he had three sons and one daughter, adding, "I had another daughter, but did not bring her up.' "Not bring her up! what then did you do with her?" "I smothered her; and this year I heard, by letter, that another daughter was born; I sent word to have that smothered also, but the mother has preserved it alive." Mr. Medhurst, shocked at this speech, and still more at the horrid indifference with which it was uttered, exclaimed, "What! murder your own children? Do you not shudder at such an act?" "Oh no," replied the man; "it is a very common thing in China; we put the female children out of the way, to save the trouble of bringing them up; some people have smothered five or six daughters!" *a*

*a* Ps. cxxxviii. 5, cxxxiv. 3.

"The loss of worldly things is to many a great grief; but is not the obtaining of an everlasting kingdom a good salve for this sore? If we gain, with the loss of transitory things, heavenly treasures, with the forsaking of worldly friends Christ to be our sure friend, and with the refusing father, mother, brother, sister, wife, and children, purchase God to be our Father, and Christ to be our Brother, what have we lost?"—*T. Timme.*

19—21. Comp. Ps. cxv. 9—11, cxviii. 2—4. Obs. that here the house of Levi is added. (21) out of Zion, God blesses out of Zion, and so, in response, out of Zion His people bless Him. *a*

*Praising God.*—A young man from a Sabbath school became a sailor boy, and went to sea. The ship was passing round Cape Horn; and the poor lad was sent up the rigging one wild, dark, stormy night. The masts, and cordage, and sails were all crusted over with slippery sleet. The poor lad could scarcely keep his hold at all, and would have fallen overboard if an older sailor up in the rigging had not held him up: and he could scarcely hold him up, his own hold and foothold was so uncertain, and it seemed as though he would drop. He said to the boy, "If you can say a prayer you had better be saying it now." "I can say no prayer," said the boy; "but I think I can say a bit of a hymn I learned at the Sabbath school;" and he sang out that wild wintry night:—

> "His voice commands the tempest forth,
> And stills the stormy wave;
> And though His hand be strong to smite,
> 'Tis also strong to save."

author and date, —— unknown

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-SIXTH.*

*Praise of God's gracious goodness.*

1—3. (1) give thanks, the proper response to unfailing and abounding mercies. mercy, better rend. "gracious goodness." (2) God of gods, altogether above and beyond all idol-gods. *a* (3) Lord of lords, having authority over all seeming authorities. Altogether the Supreme One.

*a* De. x. 17.

*The duty of praise* (*v.* 1).—I. Concerning the duty to which we are here invited. 1. It supposes a grateful sense of Divine benefits; 2. It implies suitable expressions of gratitude. II. The persons called upon to perform this duty. 1. The whole of mankind; 2. Particularly the Church of God; 3. Those who have experienced special instances of the Divine favour. III. The foundation of this duty. 1. God's goodness; 2. His enduring mercy. IV. Inference. 1. Religion is a reasonable service; 2. Let us, from a sense of Divine mercy, resolve to serve, praise, and trust the Lord for ever. *b*

*b H. Grove. v.* 1. *Dr. R. Harris*, 71; *T. Amory*, 275; *H. Grove*, iii. 354.

"When we speak of preaching the Gospel, we do not mean reiterating certain truths to the exclusion of all others; our duty is to present, as in a great

*Praising God* (*vv.* 1—4).—"When I lately arrived," says Mr.

Kam, "at a large village, the name of which is Lileboi, north-west of Amboyna, upwards of eight hundred persons, in order to convince me of the reality of their faith in the only true and living God, brought all their idols before me, and acknowledged their foolishness. I advised them to pack them up in a large box (into which they formerly used to be put for their night's rest), to put a heavy load of stones upon them, and to drown them all in the depths of the sea in my presence. They all agreed to follow my advice: a boat was made ready for the purpose, and, with a great shout, they were carried out of the negery, and launched into the bottom of the deep. After this business was over, we sang the first four verses of the 136th Psalm." [c]

4—9. (4) **alone**, *etc.*, Ps. lxxii. 18, lxxxvi. 10. (5) **wisdom**, or understanding, Pr. iii. 19. (6) **stretched out**, Is. xlii. 5, xliv. 24. The Heb. word is fr. the same root as that trans. *firmament* in Ge. i. 6—8. **waters**, of the oceans of the earth; above wh. the land is represented as lifted, keeping them within bounds. (7) **great lights**, Ge. i. 14—16. (8) **to rule**, Heb. *for the rulings*. (9) **to rule**, this form is *plural*, to indicate the several distinct dominations of the moon and the stars.

*Abused mercy.*—To sin because mercy abounds is the devil's logic. He that sins because of mercy, is like one that wounds his head because he hath a plaster; he that sins because of God's mercy, shall have judgment without mercy. Mercy abused turns to fury (De. xxix. 19, 20). "If he bless himself, saying, I shall have peace though I walk after the imaginations of my heart, to add drunkenness to thirst, the Lord will not spare him, but the anger of the Lord, and His jealousy, shall smoke against that man." Nothing sweeter than mercy, when it is improved; nothing fiercer, when it is abused; nothing colder than lead when it is taken out of the mine; nothing more scalding than lead when it is heated. Nothing blunter than iron, nothing sharper when it is whetted. "The mercy of the Lord is upon them that fear Him." Mercy is not for them that sin and fear not, but for them that fear and sin not. [a]

10—15. (10) **in their firstborn**, chastising the nation by the destruction of the firstborn of men and cattle. [a] (11) **brought**, *etc.*, the favour of God to His covenant people is the point of the Psalm. (12) **strong hand**, De. iv. 34. (13) **into parts**, the Heb. word is only used besides in Ge. xv. 17, where it denotes the pieces into which Ab. divided the animals. [b] (14, 15) **overthrew**, lit. *shook out*, the same word is used in Ex. xiv. 27.

*Ingratitude.*—The Athenians were ready to forget their benefactors when they met with any slight reverses, and would sometimes load their best friends with the heaviest calumnies. One of them thus offended replied in sorrowful tones, "Are you weary of receiving benefits often from the same hand?" Our ingratitude towards God might elicit from Him the same rebuke. He daily loadeth us with benefits, and yet we smite the lips that kiss us, and wound the heart that bled for us. One of the strangest things about the character of a Christian is that he should become weary of such amazing love.

16—22. (16) **which led**, De. viii. 15. The Psalmist recalls the general protection and care of the forty years' wanderings.

historical picture, the whole of God's Word, every figure in its place and proportion; ever bearing in mind that the great centre figure of the whole group, on which the whole depends, is the Lord Jesus Christ."—*Stowell.*

c *Whitecross.*

a *T. Watson.* "The patient bearing of misery is an acceptable sacrifice to God; for when the goldsmith putteth a piece of gold into the fire to make better use of it, it seemeth to the unskilful that he utterly marreth it. So the children of God in all affliction seem, to the judgment of the natural man, undone and brought to nothing; but spiritual things are spiritually discerned."—*Greenham.*

a "The Targum gives, 'To Him who smote the Egyptians (whom) He slew with plagues.'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

b Comp. Ex. xiv. 16, 21; Ps. lxxviii. 12, 13.

God is independent of all His creatures; He was as happy in Himself, before a creature existed, as He has been since.

a "If the four verses 19—22

were omitted, the Psalm would consist of 22 verses, one for each letter of the alphabet, and the phraseology of the above-named verses in the original is such that they would seem not improbably taken from the preceding Psalm."—*Speak. Com.*

"True goodness is like the glow-worm in this, that it shines most when no eyes, except those of heaven, are upon it."—*Hare.*

(17, 18) famous kings, De. xxix. 7; Ps. cxxxv. 10, 11. (19) Sihon, Nu. xxi. 21. (20) Og, Nu. xxi. 33. (21) heritage, or possession, Jos. xii. 7. The term *heritage* may be intended to remind the people that they had the land in fulfilment of gracious Div. covenant and promise. It was like an estate *willed* to them: their only right to the land was the "free gift" of it to them by its real Owner, who made them His heirs. (22) his servant, De. xxxii. 36.[a]

*Gentleness and forbearance.*—Some of the laws of Lycurgus, imposing the necessity of subjugating the passions, were so repelled by the Lacedæmonians that on one occasion he was obliged to escape from the resentment of the populace. Before he reached the Temple of Refuge a young man assailed him with a stick and struck out his eye. He turned his face to the people, and showed them the sightless orb streaming with blood. They surrendered the assailant to his hands. He took him home, but, instead of inflicting punishment, displayed such ingenuousness of disposition and such mildness of heart that he constrained the youth penitently and humbly to acknowledge his fault. Gentleness and forbearance are assuredly more piercing weapons than swords and spears. He who won His enemies by giving His life for them, and in the hour of death displayed His pity by praying for them, set us an example and taught us a lesson which no earthly instructor can.

23—26. (23) remembered . . estate, this is a general survey of God's gracious relation to the distresses of the nation, with a special glance at the recent deliverance from Babylon.[a] low estate, comp. Eccl. x. 6, where the same Heb. word *shêphel*. is used. (24) redeemed, this general term includes all kinds of defendings and deliverings. (25) giveth food, as Ps. civ. 27, cxlv. 15, cxlvii. 9. (26) God of heaven, so distinguished from all local deities.[b]

*A call to adore God for His mercy* (*v.* 26).—Praise is the employment of heaven; should be that of earth. Endeavour—I. To contemplate it, *i.e.* the mercy of God. 1. In its unbounded extent: 2. Its everlasting duration. II. To adore it. For—1. It is due from us; 2. It is pleasing and acceptable to God.[c]

*God is love.*—It is the one, almost only struggle of religious life to believe this. In spite of all the seeming cruelties of this life, in spite of the clouded mystery in which God has shrouded Himself, in spite of pain, and the stern aspect of human life, and the gathering of thicker darkness and more solemn silence round the soul as life goes on, simply to believe that God is love, and to hold fast to that, as a man holds on to a rock with a desperate grip when the salt surf and the driving waves sweep over him and take his breath away: I say that this is the one fight of Christian life, compared with which all else is easy. When we believe that, human affections are easy. It is easy to be generous, and tolerant, and benevolent when we are sure of the heart of God, and when the little love of this life, and its coldness, and its unreturned affections are more than made up to us by the certainty that our Father's love is ours. But when we lose sight of that, though for a moment, the heart sours, and men seem no longer worth the loving; and wrongs are magnified, and injuries cannot be forgiven, and life itself drags, a mere death in life. A man may doubt anything and everything, and

a Ps. cvi. 42—45.

*b* The Pr. Bk. Ver., following the Vulg., adds, "O give thanks unto the Lord of lords, for His mercy endureth for ever," repeating ver. 3.

"In the end of the Psalm, God's fatherly providence is extended without exception, not only to all mankind, but also to all living things, so that it is no marvel though He is so provident and beneficent a father towards His elect, since He grudges not to provide even for oxen and asses, ravens and sparrows."—*Calvin.*

*c C. Simeon, M.A.*

v. 23. *D. Brown, Memorial Sketches*, 386.

*d R. W. Robertson.*

still be blessed, provided only he hold fast to that conviction. Let all drift from him like seaweed on life's ocean. So long as he reposes on the assurance of the eternal charity, his spirit, at least, cannot drift. There are moments. I humbly think, when we understand those triumphant words of St. Paul, "Let God be true and every man a liar."

"Heaven's harmony is universal love."—*Cowper.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED & THIRTY-SEVENTH.*

author,—prob. a Levite of the first company of returned captives

*A touching reminiscence of the now terminated exile.*

1—3. (1) rivers, the Euphrates and Tigris, also the Chebar (Eze. i. 3), and the Ulai (Da. viii. 2).[a] Babylon,[b] prop. Babylonia, the name of the city being put for the country. sat down, for time of quiet meditation. Zion, or Jerusalem, the associations of their beloved land. (2) harps, specially used for joyous occasions. willows, Heb. *arabim;* what is known as the weeping willow may principally be meant (the *Salix Babylonica*). in the midst, of the country of Babylonia. (3) required . . song, whether this request was made in curiosity or derision does not appear. It was felt to be impossible for mourners and exiles to respond to it.

*The sorrowful Christian* (*v.* 2).—The sources of spiritual sorrow. I. Some of them arise from bodily disorder. II. Some from defective views of character. III. Some from defective views of religion. IV. Some from allowed sin. V. Some from inward struggles peculiar to self.[c]

*The Jews' love for Jerusalem.*—"In passing up to the synagogue, I was particularly struck with the mean and wretched appearance of the houses on both sides of the streets, as well as with the poverty of their inhabitants. The sight of a poor Jew in Jerusalem has in it something peculiarly affecting. The heart of this wonderful people, in whatever clime they roam, still turns to it as the city of their promised rest. They take pleasure in her ruins, and would kiss the very dust for her sake. Jerusalem is the centre round which the exiled sons of Judah build, in imagination, the mansions of their future greatness. In whatever part of the world he may live, the heart's desire of a Jew is to be buried in Jerusalem. Thither they return from Spain and Portugal, from Egypt and Barbary, and other countries among which they have been scattered; and when, after all their longings, and all their struggles up the steeps of life, we see them poor, and blind, and naked, in the streets of their once happy Zion, he must have a cold heart that can remain untouched by their sufferings, without uttering a prayer that God would have mercy on the darkness of Judah, and that the day-star of Bethlehem might arise in their hearts."[d]

4—6. (4) strange land,[a] better, "in the land of the stranger," to wh. they had been exiled by Him whose songs they were asked to sing. It was for them a time of humiliation before the Lord, not one of singing triumph songs. (5) let . . cunning, observe the play on the word *forget.*[b] (6) tongue cleave, so as never to be able to sing any more. above . . joy, lit. *top of my joy.*[c]

*The singers and their song* (*v.* 4).—I. The Christian on earth is in a strange land—1. As to his feelings: 2. As to his supplies; 3. As to his dangers. II. The Christian on earth, although on

*a* The river-side may have been chosen for the performance of religious rites, as indicated in Ac. xvi. 13.

*b* Babylon was taken by Cyrus, B.C. 538; the Jews were allowed to return B.C. 536. Babylon was destroyed by Darius Hystaspes, B.C. 516; and about the same time the temple was rebuilt.

*c G. Brooks.*

*r.* 1. *Sydney Smith*, i. 203; *E. Blencowe*, ii. 484; *W. Jones*, ii. 19.

*vv.* 1–6. *T. Chalmers*, vi. 88; *W. Jay*, vi. 224; *H. Crabb*, 234; *T. Arnold*, 313; *Bp. Selwyn.*

*d Richardson.*

*a* Ne. ii. 2, 3.

*b* "*Forget herself,*" so trans. *Ewald, Delitzsch.*

"'Let my right hand forget its deftness in striking the harp. This may be what is meant,

or there may be a more general allusion to manual strength and skill." *Jennings and Lowe.*

*Syr.* renders, "Let my right hand forget me."

*c* "If I set not Jerusalem as a diadem on to the head of my rejoicing, and crown all my happiness with it."—*Wordsworth.*

*d G. Brooks.*

"Thou canst not tell how rich a dowry sorrow gives the soul, how firm a faith and eagle-sight of God."—*Alford.*

"Sorrows remembered sweeten present joy."—*Pollok.*

*e Richardson.*

*f* "We see from Obad.'s prophecy how shamefully the Edomites, that brother-people related by descent to Israel, and yet pre-eminently hostile to it, behaved in connection with the destruction of Jerusalem by the Chaldæans."—*Delitzsch.*
*b* Comp. Is. x. 32, xlvii. 1; Je. xlvi. 11.
*c* The destruction of Bab. had been foretold by the prophets, as Is. xiii. 14; Je. li. 33.
*d R. T. S.*

earth, has songs—1. Of gratitude; 2. Penitence; 3. Of resignation; 4. Of hope.*d*

*Singing in a strange land.*—Sebah, oasis of Fezzan, 10th March, 1846.—This evening the female slaves were unusually excited in singing, and I had the curiosity to ask my negro servant, Said, what they were singing about. As many of them were natives of his own country, he had no difficulty in translating the Wandara or Bornou language. I had often asked the Moors to translate their songs for me, but got no satisfactory account from them. Said at first said, "O they sing of Rubee" (God). "What do you mean!" I replied impatiently. "O don't you know!" he continued, "they ask God to give them their atka" (certificate of freedom). I inquired, "Is that all?" Said: "No, they say, 'Where are we going? The world is large. O God! where are we going? O God!'" I inquired, "What else?" Said: "They remember their country, Bornou, and say, 'Bornou was a pleasant country, full of all good things; but this is a bad country, and we are miserable." "Do they say anything else?" Said: "No, they repeat these words over and over again, and add, 'Give us our atka, and let us return again to our own dear home.'" I am not surprised I got little satisfaction when I asked the Moors about the songs of their slaves. Who will say that the above words are not a very appropriate song? What could have been more congenially adapted to their then woful condition? It is not to be wondered at that these poor bondwomen cheer up their hearts, in their long, lonely, and painful wanderings over the desert, with words and sentiments like these; but I have often observed that their fatigue and sufferings were too great for them to strike up this melancholy dirge, and many days their plaintive strains never broke over the silence of the desert.*e*

7—9. (7) **children of Edom**, *i.e.* remember how Edom joined the enemies of Jerusalem in the day of her overthrow.*a* **rase it**, Heb. *make bare.* (8) **daughter of Bab.**, a fig. for Babylon with its population.*b* **destroyed**, who oughtest to be and shalt be destroyed.*c* **rewardeth**, *etc.*, Is. xlvii. 1—9; Je. li. 56. (9) **dasheth**, *etc.*, this allusion is to the horrors generally attending on the siege and sack of ancient cities.

*A child's appeal.*—At the close of a battle, a soldier of the victorious army, more ferocious and reckless from the bloody work of the day, chanced to find a small boy on the field, and, very much from the habit of assailing whatever came in his way, lifted his sword to cleave him down, when the little fellow, looking up in his face, exclaimed, "Oh, sir, don't kill me, I'm so little." That simple appeal went to the warrior's heart; and, returning his sword into its scabbard, he galloped away without harming the child. Some men there possibly may be who would have killed him, but scarce one man in a million would so outrage his own nature.*d*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-EIGHTH.*

author,—possibly David

"*The grateful confidence of a*

1—3. (1) **whole heart**, involving entireness and sincerity. **before the gods**, *i.e.* in the presence of, and in scorn of, the idols of the heathen.*a* (2) **toward**, *etc.*, this expression is cer-

tainly more suited to an *exile* than to David.[b] thy word, or Thy fidelity to Thy promises. thy name, or all other characteristics implied in Thy name or title, *Jehovah*.[c] (3) in the day,[d] or immediately. strengthened me, by granting personal experiences of answer to prayer.

*Internal evidences of revelation* (*v.* 2).—I. The Bible alone answers all the purposes of a supernatural revelation. II. The inspiration of the Scriptures may be conclusively determined from their holiness and purity. III. Another argument in favour of the inspiration of the Scriptures may be deduced from their perfect harmony. IV. The Bible is the most inexhausted and the most exhaustless book. V. The inspiration of the Scriptures may be argued from the elevation and grandeur of their design. VI. It appears also from their power and efficacy.[e]—*The Word and the name of God.*—The Word of God is magnified—I. As a medium of His self-manifestation. II. As an exposition of His government. III. As a revelation of His mercy. IV. As an instrument of His power.[f]

befriended supplant."

*a* So *Hengstenberg, Hupfeld, Perowne*, etc. "In the presence of the angels." So *Sept., Vulg., Luther, Calvin*, etc. "Before kings or judges." So *Chald., Syr.*, etc.
*b* 1 Ki. viii. 48.
*c* "Magnified Thy promise above all Thy name."—*Delitzsch.*
*d* Is. lxv. 24; Da. ix. 23.
*e* *Dr. G. Spring.*
*f* *G. Brooks.*

4, 5. (4) all the kings, comp. Ps. lxviii. 29—32, lxxii. 10, 11.[a] words, *etc., i.e.* Thy promises to David and his people. (5) sing . . Lord, joyfully celebrate His mighty acts.[b] great is the glory, better rend. "when the glory shall be great in God's fulfilling His purposes of redemption.

*Joy in the ways of the Lord* (*v.* 5).—I. The ways of the Lord are very various as to their outward manifestations. II. They are all of them right, and arranged by infinite wisdom and love. III. Faith discerns reasons for thankfulness in every way of the Lord. IV. Hence he can sing with the spirit and with the understanding also, his heart making melody to the Lord. V. Some special ways of the Lord call for special songs of praise, as the way of pardon, deliverance, etc.

*a* "Hiram, king of Tyre (2 Sa. v. 11; 1 Chr. xiv. 1), and Toi, king of Homath (2 Sa. viii. 10), congratulated David upon his accession, and are supposed to be here briefly intended."—*Syk. Com.* Ps. cii. 15, 22; Is. lx. 3; Ro. x. 18.
*b* Is. lxvi. 10, 12.
*R. Eden*, 297.
*a* *Perowne.*
*b* Phil. i. 6.
"The Lord will carry to an end all things that concern my welfare."—*Jennings and Lowe.*
*c* *G. Brooks.*
"We write our blessings on the water, but our afflictions on the rock."—*Dr. Guthrie.*

6—8. (6) though, *etc.*, comp. 2 Sa. vi. 21, xxiii. 1; Ps. xviii. 28, 29, etc., as similar expressions used by David. knoweth afar off, *i.e.* "God only knows them at a distance, does not admit them into His fellowship."[a] (7) walk . . trouble, Ps. xxiii. 4, lxxi. 20. stretch forth, *etc.*, 1 Sa. xxiv. 6; Ps. x. 12; Job i. 12. (8) perfect,[b] completely work out all His purpose of grace concerning me.

*The majesty and the mercy of God* (*v.* 6).—Consider—I. The majesty of God. 1. His eternity; 2. His immutability; 3. His power; 4. His goodness. II. The condescension of God. 1. As seen in the persons to whom this preference is shown; 2. The special blessings with which He honours them.[c]

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND THIRTY-NINTH.*

author,—possibly David

*Subj., the omniscience and omnipresence of God.*

1—5. (1) searched me, more forcibly "searched me out," "fathomed me."[a] known me, better, "and so Thou knowest me." (2) thou, this word is emphatic. downsitting, *etc.*, both my resting and my working times. afar off, or out of heaven. (3) compassest, lit. *winnowest* or *siftest*; so separating grain from chaff. acquainted, as by long and minute familiarity with them. (4) word . . tongue,[b] before it gets utterance; when it is only *thought* God knows it. (5) beset me, surrounded me, shut me in.[c]

*a* "To Thee, O God, belongeth it to spy out whatever lieth hid in me, neither can

anything escape Thee."—*Calvin.*
*b Not* in this sentence stands for *not yet.*
*c* Comp. Job iii. 23, xiii. 27, xiv. 5, 13, 16, xix. 8.
"These palpable images paint God as He is, always close to us, always directing, always restraining."—*Spk. Com.*
*d C. Simeon, M.A.*
*e Masson.*

*a* Ro. xi. 33.
*b Delitzsch.*
*c* Comp. Jno. i. 3.
*d* "The word spirit is not put here simply for the power of God, as commonly in the Scriptures, but for His mind and understanding."—*Calvin.*
*e* Pr. xv. 11; Job xxvi. 6—9.
*f R. W. Clark.*
*v.* 7. *L. Atterbury*, i. 142; *Dr. Enfield*, i. 1; *J. Adams*, 61; *G. Burder*, 6; *A. Williams*, i. 383.
"The nominal professions of religion with which many persons content themselves, seem to fit them for little else than to disgrace Christianity by their practice."—*Milner.*

*a* "If I should lift wings such as the dawn of the morning has, *i.e.* could I fly with the swiftness with which the dawn of the morning spreads itself over the eastern sky, towards the extreme west, and

*The omnipresence and omniscience of God* (*vv.* 1—12).—David was bitterly persecuted, he took refuge in a good conscience. He took comfort from his idea of God. I. Consider the truths here acknowledged. 1. He solemnly asserts the omnipresence of the Deity; 2. His omniscience. II. Some reflections arising from them. 1. That many, however high they may be in their own estimation, will be found most awfully to have deceived themselves in the last day; 2. That many who are low in the estimation both of themselves and others, shall receive at last from God Himself a glorious testimony in their behalf.[d]

*God's omniscience.*—Milton, as a young man, travelled much abroad; years afterwards he thus expressed himself: "I again take God to witness that in all places where so many things are considered lawful, I lived sound and untouched from all profligacy and vice, having this thought perpetually with me, that though I might escape the eyes of men, I certainly could not the eyes of God."[e]

6—8. (6) **knowledge**, such "omniscience."[a] "Knowledge so all-penetrating, so all-comprehensive."[b] **attain**, or "I have not grown up to it." "I have not mastered it." (7) **whither**, *etc.*, not the language of fear, but of awe and wonder.[c] **spirit**,[d] the omnipresence of God is *spiritual.* (8) **bed in hell**,[e] Sheol, the place of resting for the departed. Heb. "If I should make Hades my resting-place."

*The Christian at summer retreats* (*v.* 7).—The doctrine of the omnipresence of the Deity will be to men either joyous or terrific, according to character. We now limit the application of the doctrine to seasons of relaxation, etc. We observe—I. That Christianity is a law of life, not a local or temporary interest. II. A relaxation from business, and a resort to the country, or to the various attractive retreats that are open to the public, may be a means of positive spiritual culture. III. Another influential consideration is the fact, that in travelling new avenues of usefulness are opened. IV. As we cannot flee from the Divine presence, so we cannot flee from that equally universal presence, danger.[f]

*Omnipresence of God.*—Collins, the free-thinker, or deist, met a plain countryman going to church. He asked him where he was going. "To church, sir." "What to do there?" "To worship God." "Pray, whether is your God, a great or a little God?" "He is both, sir." "How can He be both?" "He is so great, sir, that the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him: and so little, that He can dwell in my heart." Collins declared that this simple answer from the countryman had more effect upon his mind than all the volumes which learned doctors had written against him.

9, 10. (9) **wings**, comp. Mal. iv. 2.[a] **uttermost . . sea**, *i.e.* the furthest west. (10) **there**, away beyond all presence of man, I shall find Thee. The terms used here imply friendship.

*God is everywhere.*—During the ravages of the Great Plague in London, Lord Craven, whose house was situated where Craven Street now stands, alarmed at the progress of the disease, determined to retire into the country. His carriage was at the door, and he was passing through the hall to enter it, when he heard a negro servant saying to another domestic, "I suppose, by my lord's quitting London to avoid the plague, that his God lives in

the country, and not in town." The negro said this in the innocent simplicity of his heart, really believing in a plurality of gods. This speech, however, struck Lord Craven most forcibly. "My God," thought he, "lives everywhere, and can preserve me in town as well as in the country. I will even stay where I am. The ignorance of that negro has preached a useful sermon to me. Lord, pardon that unbelief, and that distrust of Thy Providence, which made me think of running away from Thy hand." He countermanded his orders for the journey, he remained in London, he was remarkably useful in administering to the necessities of the sick, and he was saved from the surrounding infection.[b]

alight there."—*Delitzsch.*

*vv.* 7—10. *Bp. Hopkins*, iv. 255; *Abp. Tillotson*, viii. 434; *J. Abernethy*, i. 216; *Dr. Leland*, i. 109; *J. Flavel*, v. 371.

*b R. T. S.*

**11—13.** (11) **even . . me**, better rendered, "and let the light round about me be night." (12) **hideth not**, Heb. *darkeneth not.* "Even darkness cannot be too dark for Thee."[a] **darkness**, *etc.*, *Heb.* "as the darkness so the light" (to Thee).[b] (13) **for**, *etc.*, since Thou knewest me before I was born, I cannot expect to escape Thee now that I have separate being. **possessed**, created, or formed. **my reins**, in distinction from "substance," *v.* 15, this may mean "the sensational and emotional part of the human being." **covered me**, or "Thou didst weave me together."[c]

*a Perowne.*

*b* Job xxxiv. 22; Da. ii. 22; Is. xxix. 15.

*c* Comp. Job x. 11.

*Dr. Marshall.*—Dr. Marshall, a lecturer on human anatomy, had deeply studied the construction and laws of man, and was never happier than when explaining them. He once devoted a whole lecture to display the profound science that was visible in the formation of the double hinges of our joints. Such was the effect of his demonstrations, that an inquisitive friend, who had accompanied Dr. Turner to the lecture, with sceptical inclinations, suddenly exclaimed with great emphasis, "A man must be a fool indeed, who after duly studying his own body can remain an atheist." "I felt," says the doctor, "as he did, but had not been aware that his objecting mind was spontaneously working itself into so important a conviction."[d]

*v.* 13. *W. Barrow*, i. 317; *B. Bayly*, i. 25.

If Christ seals on your heart His pardoning mercy, that mercy brings all others with it and in its train.

"Painted fire needs no fuel; a dead, formal profession is easily kept up."—*Manton.*

*d R. T. S.*

**14. thee**, emphatic, God alone is the Creator. **fearfully**, *etc.*, "I give thanks unto Thee that I have wonderfully come into being under fearful circumstances,—circumstances exciting a shudder of astonishment."[a] **that my soul knoweth**, *viz.* that Thy works are fearfully wonderful. The mysterious birth and early life of men especially engages the Psalmist's attention.

*a Delitzsch.*

"From hence comes the reckless indulgence of the flesh, because we weigh not thoroughly how wonderfully the heavenly Workmaster hath fashioned us."—*Calvin.*

*The mysteriousness of our present being* (*v.* 14).—The great doctrine of the Trinity in unity a mystery. Mysteries in religion are measured by the proud according to their own comprehension, by the humble according to the power of God. There are mysteries about ourselves which we cannot deny. I. We are made up of soul and body. II. The soul is not only one, and without parts, but moreover, as if by a great contradiction even in terms, it is in every part of the body. It is nowhere yet everywhere. III. Further consider what a strange state we are in when we dream, and how difficult it would be to convey to a person who had never dreamed what was meant by dreaming. It is unwise therefore to stumble at mysteries simply because they are mysteries.[b]

*b J. H. Newman.*

*The immortality of man.*—We say that destruction is the order of nature, and some say that man must not hope to escape the universal law. Now we deceive ourselves in this use of words;

A life without God is like a ship without a compass, a rudder, or a pilot, exposed to the caprice of the winds of heaven and to the buffeting of every storm, and shipwreck of heart and hope must be the inevitable issue.

*L. Atterbury*, i. 203; *T. Davies*, 65; *A. Fuller*, 668; *H. E. Manning*, i. 47; *Bp. Wordsworth*, i. 34; *E. H. Plumptre*, 19.

The Scriptures express our life by the two Greek words, *psuche* and *zoe*. This shows you that a spiritual man lives two lives: the one a natural life (he is a "living soul"); the other a spiritual life, he is a "quickened" spirit.

*c W. E. Channing.*

"In my opinion, he only may be truly said to live, and enjoy his being, who is engaged in some laudable pursuit, and acquires a name by some illustrious action or useful art."—*Sallust.*

*a* "As an embroidered garment, diversified with colours, my substance was curiously and artistically. (yea, with art inimitable) wrought in the utter darkness of the womb."—*Spk. Com.*

*b* "My undeveloped form Thine eyes did see, and in Thy book were they all written, (viz.) the days (of my life), which were (already) conceived of, and for it one among them. For *it*, referring to the embryonic period."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*v.* 15. *J. C. Dieterle*, 773.

"No life is waste in the great Worker's hand. The gem too poor

there is in reality no destruction in the material world. True, the tree is resolved into its elements, but its elements survive; and, still more, they survive to fulfil the same end which they before accomplished. Not a power of nature is lost. The particles of the decayed tree are only left at liberty to form new, perhaps more beautiful and useful, combinations; they may shoot up into more luxuriant foliage, or enter into the structure of the highest animals. But were mind to perish, there would be absolute, irretrievable destruction; for mind, from its nature, is something individual, an uncompounded essence, which cannot be broken into parts, and enter into union with other minds. I am myself, and can become no other being. My experience, my history, cannot become my neighbour's. My consciousness, my memory, my interest in my past life, my affections, cannot be transferred. If in any instance I have withstood temptation, and through such resistance have acquired power over myself and a claim to the approbation of my fellow-beings, this resistance, this power, this claim are my own; I cannot make them another's. I can give away my property, my limbs: but that which makes myself—in other words, my consciousness, my recollections, my feelings, my hopes—these can never become parts of another mind. In the extinction of a thinking, moral being, who has gained truth and virtue, there would be an absolute destruction. This event would not be as the setting of the sun, which is a transfer of light to new regions; but a quenching of the light. It would be a ruin, such as nature nowhere exhibits; a ruin of what is infinitely more precious than the outward universe, and is not, therefore, to be inferred from any of the changes of the material world.[c]

15, 16. (15) substance, or bones, bodily framework. in secret, out of all watching or care of men. curiously wrought, the Heb. word is used of variegated work woven, or perhaps embroidered. Possibly the allusion may be to the system of veins ramifying the body, or to the variegated colouring of its individual members, more particularly of the inward part.[a] lowest . . earth, fig. for the womb, as chamber out of reach of the eye of man, or earthly light. (16) imperfect, only in embryo stages. members, most comments. prefer to put the word *days*.[b] Job x. 5—11.

*Connection of body and soul.*—The body is more than a shell, more than a garment, more than a house: it is the married, co-operating partner of the spirit. As the soul is fitted to be a habitation of God, so is the body fitted to be the habitation of the soul. The soul is no sooner affected by the presence of God than the body also is affected. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, the body takes on the condition of the spirit. If the soul be in distress, the body also is in distress and refuses food, or if food be taken the stomach has not spirit enough to digest it. In hours of social delight, the body is as much helped and comforted as the spirit; all its senses become keen, the appetite is lively, the digestion is vigorous. Every hour of life the body is receiving its condition from the spirit. If you pray, not only the soul but the body also receives Divine influence. If you sin, the curse fulfils itself in your soul and body at the same time. The blood and brains of a meek, humble, heavenly-minded man carry qualities in it which the blood and brains of a worldly-minded

man do not. Two men being dead, the one a regenerate, and the other an unregenerate man, not only their souls are in different conditions and different worlds, but their flesh and bones retain the distinctive qualities of their two souls. There are virtues latent in all bodies corresponding with the souls which lived in them. If I may say so, Elisha slumbers in his bones; that is, as the man was, such the bones are. Joseph's bones do not belong to Egypt.[c]

17, 18. (17) **precious**, the word used rather suggests, "hard to understand," *lit.* "how heavy, how weighty."[a] **sum of them**, lit. *sums*, an unusual plural. (18) **still with thee**, full of the thought of Thee, and Thy wondrous plans and ways.[b]

*God's thoughts* (*vv.* 17, 18).—We shall consider them—I. In contrast to the vanity and imperfection of human thoughts. 1. They are not merely speculative and theoretic; 2. They are infallible, not abortive; 3. They are harmonious and uniform, not contradictory; 4. They are holy and weighty. II. Their infinite number. 1. Note the countless multitude of objects which they regard; 2. The purposes of wisdom and goodness which they embrace; 3. The innumerable acts in which they issue. III. Their preciousness. 1. As involving beneficence to the individual; 2. In the methods of their disclosure; 3. The benefits accruing from them; 4. They will be magnified in the consummation of all things.

*Properties of the Scriptures.*—The properties of Scriptures may be summarily enumerated as follows:—1. All of it is clear and intelligible enough to persons who sincerely desire to conform the heart and life accordingly. 2. The Word of God is found to be of special effect upon the heart for conviction, conversion, instruction, and comfort in all ages and nations; and hereby evinces—3. Its Divine authority; whence it follows—4. That it is the standard for determining every controversy in matters of faith. 5. It is perfect, as containing whatever is necessary to be known and believed in order to salvation. 6. It is also profitable, as containing nothing irrelevant or useless. 7. The providence of God has watched over it, so that it retains its purity unsullied, and can be enjoyed now, as it ever could be from the beginning.[c]

19—22. (19) **slay the wicked**, "the change of subject is singularly abrupt." The thought of God's almighty power suggests a prayer that this power might be put forth against the Psalmist's persecutors.[a] **depart**, *etc.*, he wanted no association with those who could not adore with him the omniscient and omnipresent God. **bloody**, or bloodthirsty. Ps. v. 6, xxvi. 9. (20) **wickedly**, in bad terms, and in a bad spirit. (21) **that hate thee**, very love makes us jealous of the honour of our Beloved. (22) **perfect hatred**, or the perfection of hatred.[b]

*Lesson to conquerors.*—When Edward the Confessor had entered England from Normandy to recover the kingdom, and was ready to give the Danes battle, one of his captains assured him of victory, adding, "We will not leave one Dane alive." To which Edward replied, "God forbid that the kingdom should be recovered for me, who am but one man, by the death of thousands. No, I will rather live a private life, unstained by the blood of my fellow-men, than be a king by such a sacrifice." Upon which he broke up his camp, and again retired to Normandy, until he was restored to his throne without blood.

to polish in itself is ground to brighten others."—*Bailey.*

*c J. Pulsford.*

*a* "Such expressions of personal feeling lend not only much beauty and force, but also much reality, to the contemplation of God's attributes."—*Perowne.*

*b* "If I am lost in my meditations on this subject, and recover myself from this state of reverie, yet I am still ever with Thee without coming to an end."—*Ewald.*

Ps. xl. 5; Is. lv. 9.

*c Bengel.*

"The Christian's privileges lie in pronouns; but his duty in adverbs: it must not be only *bonum* (good), but it must be *bene* (well): that good must be rightly done."—*Mead.*

*a* "According to *v.* 21, it is not resentment for personal wrongs, but simple zeal for God's honour, which actuates the utterer of these fervid expressions."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* 2 Pe. ii. 7, 8.

"Oh, pray for life! thou feels't that, with these faults of thine, thou art not ready yet with sons of God to shine."—*Ruckert.*

[a] Ps. v. 8, cxliii. 10; Jno. xiv. 6.

vv. 23, 24. *J. Edwards*, ii. 173; *Dr. Price*, 129; *B. Beddome*, 1; *Bp. D. Wilson*, 435; *C. Bradley*, ii. 342; *M. Jackson*, ii. 311; *C. W. Le Bas*, iii. 162; *G. W. Woodhouse*, ii. 283; *C. Marriott*, i. 17.

"The righteousness of God was most eminently glorified in the reconciliation wrought by Christ, when He made atonement for us in His blood. All after-actings of God toward us are indeed full of love; but they are all streams from this fountain, or rivers from this ocean."—*Owen.*

author,—prob. David

*A prayer for aid against slanderous enemies.*

Poss. historical connection, 1 Sa. xxii. 9, xxiii. 19. Or reference may be to Ahithophel.

"I will not say it is not Christian to make beads of others' faults, and tell them over every day; I say it is infernal. If you want to know how the devil feels, you do know, if you are such an one."—*Beecher.*

"A knavish speech sleeps in a foolish ear."—*Shakespeare.*

[a] Comp. 1 Sa. xxiii. 23.

23, 24. (23) **search me**, the prayer of one who sincerely desires to be pure and true. **heart**, which is so deceitful. **thoughts**, which are often so divided and distracted. (24) **any wicked way**, any injurious path: way leading to pain, such pain and smart as are the sure consequences of sin. **way everlasting**,[a] the one true abiding way of life. In O. T. Scripture the terms "for ever," "everlasting," are used as figures of value.

*God sees.*—Many children have read the fairy tales of the Danish writer, Hans Christian Andersen. A pleasant story of his childhood is told in a sketch of his life. Little Hans was one day with his mother and some other poor neighbours gleaning in a field of a man who was said to be very harsh and cruel. They saw him coming, and all started to run away. But Hans' clumsy wooden shoes came off; the stubble, or short stumps of the grain stalks which had been left by the reapers, hurt his tender feet, so that he could not keep up with the others, and he found he must be caught. The rough owner of the field was very near, and could almost reach him with his heavy whip, when Hans, whose hopeless case now filled him with new courage, stopped and turned, and, looking into the man's face, said, "How dare you strike me, when God sees you?" The anger of the pursuer was subdued at once. Instead of striking the boy, he gently stroked his cheeks, asked his name, and gave him some money. The truth of which little Hans had reminded him when about to do a cruel act seemed to make him ashamed of it at once, and caused him to speak and act kindly.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTIETH.*

1–3. (1) **evil man**, or evil men. **violent man**, *Heb.* "man of violences." Prob. Saul is indicated. (2) **they gathered**, the plural here shows more than one person is referred to. It may be that *Saul's party* are meant. **for war**, *i.e.* to excite it, or stir it up. (3) **sharpened**, *etc.*, Ps. lii. 2—4. **adder's poison**, Ps. lviii. 4; Ro. iii. 13.

*Æsop and Xanthus.*—The heathen philosopher, expecting some friends to dine with him, ordered his servant Æsop to provide the best things the market could supply. Tongues only were provided, and these the cook was ordered to serve up with different sauces. Course after course was supplied, each consisting of tongue. "Did I not order you," said Xanthus in a violent passion, "to buy the best victuals the market afforded?" "And have I not obeyed your orders?" said Æsop. "Is there anything better than a tongue? Is not the tongue the bond of society, the organ of truth and reason, and the instrument of our praise and adoration of the gods?" Xanthus ordered him to go again to the market on the morrow, and buy the worst things he could find. Æsop went, and again he purchased tongues, which the cook was ordered to serve as before. "What! tongues again?" exclaimed Xanthus. "Most certainly," rejoined Æsop; "the tongue is surely the worst thing in the world. It is the instrument of all strife and contention."

4, 5. (4) **purposed**, are determined, and have plotted. **overthrown**, *etc.*, comp. Ps. xxxv. 6. (5) **snare**, *see* Ps. ix.

16, xxxi. 4, cxlii. 3.[a] **gins**, the word *gin* is a contraction of *engine*, so refers generally to mechanical instruments. Here it means a contrivance to ensnare, a trap.

*Rev. John Craig.*—The Rev. John Craig, a distinguished minister and colleague of Knox, having gone to reside in Bologna, in a convent of Dominicans, found a copy of Calvin's *Institutes*, which God made the means of his conversion to the reformed faith. He was seized as a heretic soon after, and carried to Rome, where he was condemned to be burned; but on the evening preceding the day of execution the reigning pontiff died, and, according to custom, the doors of all the prisons were thrown open. All others were released: but heretics, after being permitted to go outside the walls, were reconducted to their cells. That night, however, a tumult was excited, and Craig and his companions escaped. They had entered a small inn at some distance from Rome, when they were overtaken by a party of soldiers, sent to apprehend them. On entering the house, the captain looked Craig steadfastly in the face, and asked him if he remembered having once relieved a poor wounded soldier in the neighbourhood of Bologna. Craig had forgotten it. "But," said the captain, "I am the man; I shall requite your kindness; you are at liberty; your companions I must take with me; but, for your sake, I shall treat them with all possible lenity." He gave him all the money he had, and Craig escaped. But his money soon failed him: yet God, who feeds the ravens, did not. Lying at the side of a wood, full of gloomy apprehensions, a dog came running up to him with a purse in its teeth. Suspecting some evil, he attempted to drive the animal away, but in vain. He at length took the purse, and found in it a sum of money which carried him to Vienna.[b]

6–8. (6) **my God**, therefore the Divine defence he might seek. (7) **covered my head**, as a helmet in battle, or a *testudo* at a siege. **battle**, lit. *day of armour*, i.e. the day wh. necessitates equipment as for a fray. (8) **grant not**, do not carry out their schemes for them. The Psalmist well knew that "Man proposes, but God disposes." Leave out the word *lest*. The Psalmist simply draws attention to the fact that his enemies are full of confidence and self-security.

*Mr. Howatson.*—During the same persecuting period there was a worthy man of the name of Howatson, who, on account of his well-known attachment to covenanting principles, was obliged to keep himself in perpetual concealment among the more remote and unfrequented glens and mountains, in order to avoid the search of his persecutors. On one occasion, in the wintry season of the year, he ventured to spend a night under his own roof, at a time when he did not expect a surprisal from his enemies. Under the cloud of night he stole into his lonely hut without being observed. Having got some refreshment, and warmed his shivering frame, he retired, after some interesting conversation with his family, to rest. At the dead of night, however, a party of soldiers came to his house; they stationed six of their number before the door, while four of them entered the house, having softly lifted the latch—the door, from oversight, having been left unlocked. At this juncture the wife of Howatson woke, and, to her amazement, saw four men standing before the fire, attempting to light a candle; and rightly judging

*J. Alting, Op.* ii. pars. 3, 311.

*v.* 2. *J. Riddock*, ii. 351; *J. Hewlett*, iii. 19; *J. Bullar*, 345.

*v.* 3. *T. Gisborne*, ii. 238; *W. Jay*, iv. 196.

*v.* 5. *J. Owen*, xiv. 23.

"I take it as a matter not to be disputed, that if all knew what each said of the other, there would not be four friends in the world. This seems proved by the quarrels and disputes caused by the disclosures which are occasionally made."—*Pascal.*

"My life with thee is like a song, and the sweet music thou, which doth accompany it."—*Bailey.*

*b R. T. S.*

"It was not the intention of Providence that men should pass a few years here in ignoble sloth, either with indolence in safety, or pusillanimity in danger; but that we should come forth and act some useful and honourable part on that theatre where we have been placed; might glorify Him that made us; and, by a steady perseverance in virtue, rise in the end to an immortal state."—*Mathew.*

Many meet the gods, but few salute them.

"Cold prayers are as arrows without heads, as swords without

edges, as birds without wings; they pierce not, they cut not, they fly not up to heaven. Cold prayers always freeze before they reach heaven."—*Brooks.*

a *Whitecross.*

who the intruders were, she, without uttering a word, grasped her husband firmly by the arm. He instantly started up and saw the men, and observing that their backs were towards him, he slipped gently from his bed on the clay floor, and stole softly to the door. It was guarded by the dragoons. He hesitated for a moment, and then darted like an arrow through the midst of them. The waving of his snow-white shirt, like a sheet of lightning, terrified the horses, and threw the party into confusion, and though they fired several times, he escaped unhurt. He fled with the utmost speed to the house of a friend, where he obtained a lodging for the remainder of the night; and next day his clothing was conveyed to him by his wife, who could not but observe the hand of a special providence stretched out for the protection of her husband.[a]

a "Let the mischievous work of their own lips fall, as some heavy weight, upon them and destroy them; let the calumnies wh. they heap upon me fall upon and cover themselves."—*Sp. Com.*

Ps. vii. 16, xciv. 23; Pr. xii. 13, xviii. 7.

b "Misfortunes, ceaseless and unrelenting, shall continually dog his steps."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

"Mercy hath but its name from misery, and is no other thing than to lay another's misery to heart."—*Binning.*

"A Christian will find his parenthesis for prayer, even through his busiest hours."—*Cecil.*

9—13. (9) **head**, either a figure for the *chiefs* of the party, or for the life of those who assailed him. **mischief**, *etc.*, "the very things they desire for me let them come upon themselves."[a] (10) **fall**, or *be thrown.* **deep pits**, poss. should be "floods of waters." (11) **evil speaker**, a man of calumnious tongue. **evil shall hunt**, *i.e.* calamity as following upon evil doings. For the sinner "sin lieth at the door." **to overthrow him**, *lit.* "with drivings along."[b] (12) **I know**, and the confidence gives rest even in the midst of anxiety. (13) **in thy presence**, lit. *before Thy face.*

*The Pilgrim Fathers and the drought.*—It is well known that many of the good men who were driven from England to America by persecution in the seventeenth century had to endure great privations. A numerous party, who came out about 1620, were for a time supplied with food from England, and from the natives of the western wilderness. But as these resources were uncertain, they began to cultivate the ground. In the spring of 1623 they planted more corn than ever before, but by the time they had done planting their food was spent. They daily prayed, "Give us this day our daily bread;" and in some way or other the prayer was always answered. With a single boat and fishing-net they caught bass, and when these failed they dug for clams. In the month of June their hopes of a harvest were nearly blasted by a drought, which withered up the corn, and made the grass look like hay. All expected to perish with hunger. In their distress the pilgrims set apart a day for humiliation and prayer, and continued their worship for eight or nine hours. God heard their prayers, and answered them in a way which excited universal admiration. Although the morning of that day was clear, and the weather very hot and dry during the whole forenoon, yet before night it began to rain, and gentle showers continued to fall for many days, so that the ground became thoroughly soaked, and the drooping corn revived.

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIRST.*

**author,**— prob. David

*An evening prayer in a time of anxiety.*

1—5. (1) **I cry**, or I have called. (2) **as incense**, suitable for one who was banished from the sanctuary services. (3) **set . . mouth**, bec. pressure of calamity might lead him to speak doubting words of God, and bitter words concerning men. **keep the door**, Mic. vii. 5. (4) **incline not**, comp. the Lord's

prayer, "Lead us not into temptation." **dainties,**[a] the things connected with the easy, luxurious life of the wicked. (5) **righteous,** *etc.*, comp. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend." **excellent oil,** *i.e.* friendly reproof would be valuable and refreshing like oil for the head. **prayer,** *etc.*, meaning, "I will only meet my enemies' attacks with prayer."

*Keeping the door of the lips* (*v.* 3).—I. Let me ask you to consider speech as constituting one of the most tremendous agents in the world. II. Some special times and circumstances when this prayer may be offered with special fitness, and with the hope that good will come of it. 1. When anger rises within; 2. When those we address are angry; 3. When speaking of those against whom we are prejudiced; 4. When in the presence of those who may wrongly report us; 5. When we have reason to fear that the innocent may be injured; 6. When we have reason to doubt our own motives. III. Suggest a few rules for keeping the door of the lips. Ask—1. What is the motive of speech? 2. Are the words likely to injure? 3. How will the words appear in the day of judgment?[b]

*Anointing the head.*—Certain oils are said to have a most salutary effect on the head; hence, in fevers, or any other complaints which affect the head, the medical men [in Eastern countries] always recommend oil. I have known people who were deranged cured in a very short time by nothing more than the application of a peculiar kind of oil to the head. There are, however, other kinds which are believed, when thus applied, to produce delirium. Thus the reproofs of the righteous were compared to excellent oil, which produced a most salutary effect on the head. So common is this practice of anointing the head, that all who can afford it do it every week. But, strange as it may appear, the crown of the head is the place selected for chastisement. Thus, owners of slaves, or husbands, or schoolmasters, beat the heads of the offenders with their knuckles. Should an urchin come late to school, or forget his lesson, the pedagogue says to some of the other boys, "Go, beat his head!" "Begone, fellow! or I will beat thy head." Should a man be thus chastised by an inferior, he quotes the old proverb: "If my head is to be beaten, let it be done with the fingers that have rings on;" meaning a man of rank. "Yes, yes; let a holy man smite my head! and what of that? it is an excellent oil." "My master has been beating my head, but it has been good oil for me."[c]

6—10. (6) **judges,** better, "usurping rulers;" and reference may be to the princes connected with Absalom's rebellion. **hear my words,** those of David as God's anointed king. (7) **bones,** *etc.*, this *v.* may be a vigorous description of the desperate condition of David's party. They were unsettled and scattered by this rebellion, even as the clods of earth by a ploughshare. (8) **leave . . destitute,** or "pour not out my soul unto death."[a] (9) **snares,** lit. *the hands of the snares.* (10) **fall,** *etc.*, comp. Ps. cxl. 9, 10.

*Heard, but not seen.*—There is a spot on the Lake Lugano, where the song of the nightingale swells sweetly from the thicket on the shore in matchless rush of music, so that the oar lies motionless, and the listener is hushed into silent entrancement; yet I did not see a single bird; the orchestra was as

[a] Illus. may be found in the refusal of Jewish youths to eat the dainties in Babylon.

[b] *J. F. Tuttle.*

"Let the greatest part of the news thou hearest be the least part of what thou believest, lest the greatest part of what thou believest be the least part of what is true. Where lies are easily admitted, the father of lies will not easily be excluded."—*Quarles.*

[c] *Roberts.*

If you come to God through Christ, you may come with boldness to the throne of grace: but if you come without Him, you do but come with madness upon the point of the flaming sword.

"Prayers are but the body of the bird; desires are its angel's wings."—*J. Taylor.*

[a] Is. liii. 12.

A pious sergeant of a coloured regiment at Point of Rocks, when invited to take part in a meeting, said, "'Tears like I could say more in five minutes dan I could live all my life long." Words are but wind; life is real: but, when both are in har-

mony, their influence is mighty.
*b C. H. Spurgeon.*

author,—prob. David

*The prayer of one in deep affliction.*

*a* "Even the all-seeing God will not be able to discern a man who is friendly to David."—*Jennings and Lowe.*
*b G. Brooks.* "Augustus Cæsar, having promised by proclamation a great sum of money to any one that should bring him the head of a famous pirate, yet when the pirate, who had heard of this, brought it himself to him, he not only pardoned him for his former offences, but rewarded him for the great confidence that he had in his mercy."—*Spencer.*
*Dr. S. Chandler, Life of David,* i. 157.
*c Krummacher.*

*a* "The righteous will crown themselves with a garland of joy, on account of the success of my cause."—*Wordsworth.*

*b R. Cecil, M.A.*

*v.* 5. *T. Boston,* v. 44.

*v.* 7. *B. Beddome,* ii. 122; *Dr. W. Raleigh,* 356.

What an encouragement for us! Not one of us can have faith in Jesus, though it be ever so feeble, so long as it is true genuine hidden as the notes were clear. Such is a virtuous life, and such the influence of modest holiness; the voice of excellence is heard when the excellent themselves are not seen.*b*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SECOND.*

1—4. (1) **I cried,** comp. Ps. lxxvii. 1. (2) **I poured out,** or "I do pour out." (3) **when,** *etc.,* the Psalmist wishes to say that he did not cry because he had the least fear that God was ignorant of his trouble. His spirit was distressed, but he knew that God was faithful. **overwhelmed,** lit. *darkens itself upon me.* **privily,** or secretly. (4) **I looked,** better as marg. "Look Thou and see that there is none taking knowledge of me."*a* **right hand,** the position of one defending is the right side of him he defends. **no . . soul,** there is no one seeking (or inquiring for) my soul, *i.e.* with a view to my good.

*Caring for the soul* (*v.* 4).—I. What it is to care for the souls of others. 1. To have a firm conviction of their value; 2. To be alarmed at their danger; 3. To be solicitous for their welfare; 4. To try to bring them to the Saviour. II. Who ought to care for the souls of others? 1. Ministers of the Gospel: 2. Members of the church: 3. Heads of families; 4. Sabbath-school teachers. III. What are the evils of not caring for the souls of others? 1. How cruel; 2. Ungrateful; 3. Criminal; 4. Fatal. Learn:—He who thus complains shows that he thinks about his own soul: let him be the more practically in earnest to make up for others' neglect.*b*

*God cares for His people.*—Sooner than one of God's saints should be forgotten He would forget the government of the world, and would suffer the nations to take their course rather than lose sight of one of His little ones. As long as a rose of His planting blooms on earth, this desert is to Him a delightful garden, and He leaves heaven to tend and nourish this plant. And happy are ye who are the weak of the flock, the poor and needy, above others! It would seem that you lie the nearest to His heart.*c*

5—7. (5) **portion,** Ps. xvi. 5. **land of the living,** in contrast with Sheol, the place of the dead, "where this participation in God is lost." (6) **attend,** *etc.,* Ps. xvii. 1. (7) **righteous . . about,** "shall crown themselves with me;" *i.e.* make me their crown of glory.*a*

*The Lord's prisoner* (*v.* 7).—I. The state of the Psalmist's mind. II. The petition he put up. III. The argument he used. Apply:—A Christian ought never to despond, even though he may be for a time shut up as it were in prison: 2. Though it is not lawful to be impatient under trial, and to indulge hard thoughts of God, yet it is lawful to wish and to pray for deliverance from it; 3. When we carry our case to Christ for deliverance, we must make His glory our plea.*b*

*A story of Providence.*—A gentleman of very considerable fortune, but a stranger both to personal and family religion, one evening took a solitary walk through part of his grounds. He happened to come near a mean hut, where a poor man lived with a numerous family, who earned their bread by daily labour. He heard a continued and pretty loud voice. Not knowing what it was, curiosity prompted him to listen. The man, who was

piously disposed, happened to be at prayer with his family. So soon as he could distinguish the words, he heard him giving thanks, with great affection, to God for the goodness of His providence, in giving them food to eat and raiment to put on, and in supplying them with what was necessary and comfortable in the present life. He was immediately struck with astonishment and confusion, and said to himself, "Does this poor man, who has nothing but the meanest fare, and that purchased by severe labour, give thanks to God for His goodness to himself and family; and I, who enjoy ease and honour, and everything that is pleasant and desirable, have hardly ever bent my knee or made any acknowledgment to my Maker and Preserver!" It pleased God to make this providential occurrence the means of bringing him to a real and lasting sense of religion.[c]

faith, but results will follow. Every one who believeth shall not see death, but shall have everlasting life.

"Prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan."—*Bunyan.*

*c Whitecross.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-THIRD.*

author,—prob. David

*A contrite supplication.*

1—4. (1) righteousness, that side of Divine justice which is turned towards good men; hence it comes to mean "beneficence."[a] (2) be justified, pass safely through a strict Divine judgment.[b] (3) enemy, *etc.*, David means that persecution and affliction had brought him the true knowledge of himself, and had deeply humbled him.[c] in darkness, of a deep sense of sin. (4) overwhelmed, as Ps. cxlii. 3. desolate, amazed, astonied, dispirited.[d]

*The strict award of justice deprecated* (*v.* 4).—Consider these words as—I. Containing principles for our instruction. 1. That all men are sinners before God; 2. Sinners are obnoxious to God's heavy displeasure; 3. All must look for some other way of justification than by any works of their own. II. As exhibiting a pattern for our imitation. Examine—1. The general tenor of our past lives; 2. Our conduct during the past year; 3. The very best work we ever performed. Address—(1) The self-righteous and self-sufficient; (2) The broken-hearted and contrite.[e]

*Comfort from the memory of a text.*—Some years ago I visited a poor young woman dying with consumption. She was a stranger in our town, and had been there a few weeks before, some time in her girlhood, and had attended my Sabbath-school class. What did I find was her only stay, and hope, and comfort, in the view of the dark valley of the shadow of death, which was drawing down upon her? One verse of a Psalm she had learned at the class and never forgot. She repeated it with clasped hands, piercing eyes, and thin voice trembling from her white lips. "In judgment enter not with me; thy servant to be tried; because no living man," etc. No—no sinner can endure sight of thee, O God, if he does try to be self-justified.

*a* Comp. 1 Jno. i. 9.

*b* Job ix. 32, xv. 14, 15; Ro. iii. 20; Ga. ii. 16.

*c* "A consciousness of guilt and of deserved punishment seems to lie at the root of the Psalmist's prayer, and to prompt his supplication for forgiveness."—*Spk. Com.*

*d* "Seeks to comprehend the mystery of its sufferings, and is ever beaten back upon itself in its perplexity."—*Perowne.*

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

*v.* 2. *Dr. M. Hole,* i. 62; *J. J. Claude,* 85; *G. Johnson,* i. 351.

5, 6. (5) meditate, as Ps. lxxvii. 10—12. work . . hand, Ps. xliv. 1. "The mourner seeks consolation in the consideration of God's works of former ages." (6) stretch forth, in attitude of supplication.[a] thirsteth, omit this word, and render verse, "My soul is to Thee as a thirsty land."[b]

*The ministry of memory* (*v.* 5).—Contemplate the action of memory—I. As a necessity of human nature. 1. It shows the conscious unity of human life; 2. The wondrous frugality of

*a* "As the weary child stretches forth its hands to its mother, that on her bosom it may be hushed to rest."—*Perowne.*

*b* "He declares

his earnestness by a goodly similitude, comparing his soul to a d r o u g h t y ground: for in e x t r e m e droughts we see the ground chap as though it opened its mouth to look for drink from heaven."—*Calvin.*

Ps. xlii. 1, 2, cxxiii. 2, cxxx. 6.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

"A well-written life is almost as rare as a well-spent one."—*Carlyle.*

*d R. T. S.*

*e Rashi, Aben Ezra*, etc., render this sentence, "I have hidden (my t r o u b l e from others, revealing it) to Thee," i.e. "For Thee have I reserved it."

*b C. Simeon, M.A.*

*v.* 8. *T. Chemnais*, ii. 196; *G. Johnson*, 140.

"All conditions are full of complaints, from him that trudges on his clouted shoe, to him who can scarce mention the manners or the fortunes of the multitude without some expressions of contumely and disdain."—*R. Lucas.*

*c R. T. S.*

life: 3. The growing importance of life; 4. The inevitable retributiveness of life. II. As a moral obligation of human nature. The past should serve three purposes. 1. Promote evangelical sorrow; 2. Thanksgiving; 3. A purpose to improve.[c]

*An American minister.*—A good old minister, who died in America in 1807, at nearly ninety years of age, had lost his recollection, and been long incapable of engaging in public services. Towards the last days of his life he was removed to the house of a beloved son, where he was attended to with the most filial affection. On the evening before his death a neighbouring minister visited him, but he did not know him. Being told who he was, he answered, "No, I do not remember any such person." His beloved son was introduced to him; but no, he did not know him. "I do not remember that I have a son," said the good old man. In short, his memory was so impaired that he knew none of his friends or family about him. At last he was asked, "Do you not remember the Lord Jesus Christ?" On this his eyes brightened; and attempting to lift his hands in the hour of death, he exclaimed, "Oh! yes, I do! I do! I remember the Lord Jesus Christ! He is my Lord and my God, by whom I hope to be saved!" May we not be assured that the gracious Redeemer of sinners will not forsake those who thus regard Him with a love that even the decay of nature cannot destroy? Blessed are they that put their trust in Him! Reader, hast thou done so? If not, what will be thy state when thou comest to die?[d]

7—9. (7) **hear me**, evidently meaning, *answer me.* **faileth**, with weary watching and waiting. **lest**, *etc.*, Ps. xxviii. 1. (8) **cause . . hear**, Ps. xc. 14. **in the morning**, the Heb. fig. for *early, soon, speedily.* **know the way**, Ps. xxv. 8, cxlii. 3. (9) **I flee**, *etc.*, lit. *to Thee have I concealed or hidden*; prob. meaning, "in Thee have I hidden myself, *i.e.* found a refuge, or hiding-place."[a]

*God a refuge to the distressed* (*vv.* 7—10).—That I may bring the substance of this Psalm before you, I will take occasion to show you—I. To what a state a good man may, by accumulated troubles, be reduced. Of David's piety, save in the matter of Uriah, we have no doubt. 1. But he was exposed to many and sore trials; 2. Good men among ourselves may be reduced to like extremities. II. What a blessed refuge yet remains open to him. 1. To whom did David betake himself in this extremity? 2. And is there not the same refuge for us at this day? III. Show what one may hope to obtain by fervent and persevering prayer. 1. The manifestations of God's favour; 2. The interpositions of His providence; 3. The influences of His grace. Learn—(1) How to judge of our state before God; (2) How to act under overwhelming calamities.[b]

*One of the cares of Providence.*—"No doubt," said the late Rev. J. Brown, of Haddington, "I have met with trials as well as others: yet so kind has God been to me, that I think, if He were to give me as many years as I have already lived in the world, I should not desire one single circumstance in my lot changed, except that I wish I had less sin. It might be written on my coffin, 'Here lies one of the cares of Providence,' who early wanted both father and mother, and yet never missed them.'"[c]

10—12. (10) spirit is good,[a] or let Thy good spirit lead me, etc. land of uprightness, lit. *in a level land*, where there need be no fear of stumbling.[b] (11) quicken me, Ps. lxxi. 20. (12) cut off, *etc.*,[c] it is worthy of note that the Psalmist does not take the work of vengeance into his own hands, but carries his fear of his enemies wholly to God in prayer. thy servant, therefore may plead Thy protection and defence.

*Obedience to the will of God* (*v.* 10).—Three states of feeling are exhibited in David's need of Divine instruction and help in the fulfilment of the Divine will. I. Aspiration revealed. 1. Obedience is superior to knowledge; 2. Knowledge alone is positively criminal. II. Deficiency acknowledged. 1. As to the knowledge of God's will in the particular circumstances of life; 2. Of the hindrances to the performances of God's will; 3. As to the practical skill of doing the will of God. III. Desire expressed. Seek to be taught obedience—1. In the particular circumstances of life; 2. In dealing with hindrances; 3. In its active fulfilment.[d]

*The land of uprightness.*—As an upright heart hates all sins, even those he cannot conquer; so an upright soul loves all truths, even those that he cannot practise. Every word of the Lord is just and righteous in the eye of an upright soul; he loves all truth strongly, though he can practise no truth but very weakly. Every word of grace is glorious, every line of grace is very glorious. An upright heart knows that his soul is Christ's throne, His chamber of presence; and therefore, above all, the upright is most diligent to observe that none sit upon that throne but Christ, that no sceptre be advanced but the sceptre of Christ. Above all, and before all, he guards his soul; he looks to his inward parts, how he thrives, and grows, how he stands God-ward, Christ-ward, heaven-ward, and holiness-ward.[e]

a Ne. ix. 20; Ps. li. 10.
b Ps. xxvii. 11.
c "The Psalmist pleads God's loving-kindness or mercy as the ground of his prayer, or his conviction, that God will destroy his enemies. This is not the language of a revengeful and bloodthirsty spirit."—*Spk. Com.*
d *G. Bainton.*
v. 10. *J. Alting, Op.* ii. pars. 3, 313; *Dr. H. Draper*, iii. 252.
v. 12. *T. Arnold*, 448. "He lives long that lives well; and time misspent is not lived, but lost. Besides, God is better than His promise if He takes from him a lease, and gives him a freehold of greater value."—*Fuller.*
e *T. Brookes* (1649).

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FOURTH.*

author,—prob. David

*A song of confidence in God, as God of victory and social prosperity.*

1, 2. (1) my strength, lit. *my rock.*[a] One of David's most familiar figures. teacheth .. fight,[b] these expressions are eminently suited to David. See his thanksgiving song, 2 Sa. xxii. (2) my goodness, *i.e.* He who shows goodness or loving-kindness to me.[c] my deliverer, the heaping together of epithets is not superfluous, but designed to confirm and strengthen faith. my people, better, *peoples, nations.*[d]

*Rev. Hansard Knollys.*—This good man was among the Christian ministers who, in the seventeenth century, were the subjects of persecution. He was prosecuted in the High Commission Court, and fled to America, from whence, after a time, he returned. Having lived for some time in obscurity in London, he had but sixpence left, and no prospect for the support of his family. In these circumstances he prayed, encouraged his wife to remember the past goodness of God, and reflect on His promise, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee;" paid his lodging, and then went out, not knowing where the providence of God would lead him to seek the means of subsistence. He had walked but a few steps when he was met by a woman, who told him that some Christian friends had prepared a residence for him and his family, and had sent him money and other comforts. They were impressed with this manifestation of Divine goodness

a Ps. xviii. 2, 46.
b Ps. xliv. 3.
c Ps. lix. 10, 17; Jonah ii. 8.
d Is. xlv. 1.
*St. Augustine, Op.* vii. 158.

A little child was taken by her father to see and hear the famous George Whitefield. A deep impression was made upon her heart. She was taken ill the next day, and, when she was dying,

said, "Let me go to Mr. Whitefield's God!"

*a* "Literally, the *v.* runs, 'Jehovah, what is man, that Thou shouldst know him, the son of frail man that Thou shouldst take him into consideration?'"—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*b* Job viii. 9, xiv. 2; Ps. cii. 11, cix. 23.

*c G. Brooks.*

"'Let us make man in our image.' Such is man's height, and depth, and breadth, and mystery. He has not come from one principle or distinction of the Divine nature, but out of all principles. Man is the image of the whole Deity. There is in him a sanctuary for the Father, for the Son, and for the Holy Ghost. 'We will make our abode with him.'"—*J. Pulsford.*

"He was not born to shame; upon his brow shame is ashamed to sit; for 'tis a throne where honour may be crown'd sole monarch of the universal earth."—*Shakespeare.*

*d J. Howe.*

*a* Ex. xix. 18, xx. 15.

*b* Is. xliv. 20.

*v.* 3. *W. Dormer*, 129; *S. Bourn*, ii. 203; *Bp. Warburton*, ix. 33; *E. Erskine*, iii. 152;

to them, and his wife exclaimed, "O, dear husband, how sweet it is to live by faith, and trust God's faithful word! Let us rely upon Him whilst we live, and trust Him in all straits."

3, 4. (3) what is man, Ps. viii. 4. The Heb. word used here is *Adam.* son of man, Heb. *Enosh*, man in his feebleness: the son of frail mortal man.[a] (4) man . . vanity, lit. *Adam is Hebel;* Ps. xxxix. 5, 6. shadow, the evening shadow which in the E. lengthens and passes very quickly.[b]

*What is man? (v.* 3)—I. What was man as he came from the hands of his Creator? 1. Rational; 2. Responsible; 3. Immortal; 4. Holy and happy. II. What is man in his present condition? 1. Fallen; 2. Guilty; 3. Sinful; 4. Miserable and helpless in his misery. III. What is man when he has believed in Christ? 1. He is restored to a right relation to God; 2. He is restored to a right disposition towards God; 3. He enjoys the influences of the Holy Spirit; 4. He is in process of preparation for the heavenly world. IV. What shall man be when he is admitted into heaven? 1. Free from sin and sorrow; 2. Advanced to the perfection of his nature; 3. Associated with angels; 4. Near to his Saviour and his God.[c]

*Man a temple in ruins.*—"If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are" (1 Cor. iii. 17). That God hath withdrawn Himself, and left this His temple desolate, we have many sad and plain proofs before us. The stately ruins are visible to every eye, that bear in their front, yet extant, their doleful inscription —"Here God once dwelt." Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man to show the Divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity to complain He is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned, the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervour; the golden candlestick is displaced, and thrown away as a useless thing, to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness; the sacred incense, which sent rolling up in clouds its rich perfume, is exchanged for a poisonous, hellish vapour, and here is "instead of a sweet savour, a stench." The comely order of this house is turned all into confusion; the "beauties of holiness" into noisome impurities; the house of prayer into a den of thieves; for every lust is a thief, and every theft sacrilege. He that invites you to take a view of the soul of man, gives you but such another prospect, and doth but say to you, "Behold the desolation:" all things rude and waste. So that, should there be any pretence to the Divine presence, it might be said, if God be here, why is it thus? The faded glory, the darkness, the disorder, the impurity, the decayed state in all respects of this temple, too plainly show the great inhabitant is gone.[d]

5—8. (5) bow, *etc.*, comp. the prayer here with the thanksgiving of 2 Sa. xxii. 8—18. touch, *etc.*, Ps. civ. 32.[a] (6) cast forth, *lit.* "lighten lightning." arrows, poetical fig. for the lightning. (7) rid, a peculiar Aramaic word, elsewhere used in the sense of opening wide, and always in connection with the mouth or the lip. strange children, sons of the stranger; hostile tribes surrounding the sacred nation. (8) right . .

falsehood,[b] an expression denoting faithlessness to a solemn covenant, the right hand being lifted up in the taking of an oath.

*The sins of the tongue.*—A bitter word dropped from our lips against a brother is like a pistol fired amongst mountains. The sharp report is caught up and intensified and echoed by rocks and caves, till it emulates the thunder. So a thoughtless, unkind word, in passing from mouth to mouth, receives progressive exaggerations, and, snowball-like, increases as it rolls. Gossip-mongers are persons who tear the bandages from social wounds, and prevent their healing: they are persons who bring flint and steel, and acid and alkali together, and are justly chargeable with all the fire and ebullition. A whisper-word of slander is like that fox, with a firebrand tied to its tail, that Samson sent among the standing corn of the Philistines. It brings destruction into wide areas of peace and love. Evil-speaking is like a freezing wind, that seals up the sparkling waters and tender juices of flowers, and binds up the hearts of men in uncharitableness and bitterness of spirit, as the earth is bound up in the grip of winter.[c]

9—11. (9) **I will sing,** a resolve made in full anticipation of victory. **new song,** Ps. xxxiii. 3, xl. 3. Song composed freshly for new mercies received. **ten strings,** Ps. xxxiii. 2, xcii. 3. (10) **hurtful sword,** lit. *sword of evil.*[a] (11) **rid me,** *etc.*, comp. *vv.* 7, 8.

*The youth of the age* (*vv.* 11, 12).—From this prayer we infer —1. That the moral character of the youth in every age is of the first importance; 2. That the great work of governors, guardians, and parents in every age is to educate religiously young people and children; 3. That in religious nations, churches, and families there are some that are ungodly; 4. That the contagion of wicked example is most pernicious; 5. That it is the daily duty of governors, etc., to pray for the moral protection of young people. We proceed to notice—I. The evil in youth that is here deprecated. 1. Vanity; 2. Falsehood. II. The good in youth that is here desired. 1. Growth; 2. Strength; 3. Moral power.[b]

*The great end of religious education.*—To give a man a Christian education is to make him love God as well as know Him; to make him have faith in Christ as well as to have been taught the facts that He died for our sins and rose again; to make him open his heart eagerly to every impulse of the Holy Spirit, as well as to have been taught the fact as it is in the Nicene Creed —that He is the Lord and Giver of spiritual life. And will mere lessons do all this, when the course of life, and all examples around, both at home and at school, with a far more mighty teaching, and one to which our natural dispositions far more readily answer, enforce the contrary? And therefore the great work of Christian education is not the direct and certain fruit of building schools and engaging schoolmasters, but something far beyond, to be compassed only by the joint efforts of all the whole Church and nation, by the schoolmaster and the parent, by the schoolfellow at school and by the brothers and sisters at home, by the clergyman in his calling, by the landlord in his calling, by the farmer and the tradesman, by the labourer and the professional man, and the man of independent income, whether large or small, in theirs, by the queen and her ministers, by the

*J. Reeve*, i. 279; *H. Wishaw*, i. 116; *Bp. Hall*, v. 381; *T. Scott*, 181; *R. Warnford*, i. 185; *J. Riddoch*, i. 63.

"Such as are still observing on others are like those who are always abroad at other men's houses, reforming everything there while their own runs to ruin."—*Popp.*

*c F. W. Robertson*

*a* "The allusion may be to the destructiveness of the sword, or, it may be to the badness of the cause in which the sword from which the Psalmist prays for deliverance was drawn."—*Spk. Com.*

*b Caleb Morris.*

"Seize the opportunity while it lasts before the child is inured to evil, and the sinful habit is formed. Act like the skilful physician, who tells you to apply for medical aid while the disease is in its incipient state, and not to delay until the malady has seized upon the vital organs, and is out of the reach of medicine. Now is the time to apply the moral medicine (for there is balm in Gilead, and there is a Physician there), and let it be so applied as that it work freely in these young hearts, for their healing and sal-

vation."—*Dr. R. Newton. Apb. Wake*, ii. 182.

*v.* 10. *Bp. Andrewes*, v. 235; *Dr. R. South*, iii. 449; *Bp. Horne*, iv. 177.

*c Dr. Arnold.*

*a* "There is something so palpable and striking in this type, that, five-and-twenty years ago, in speaking of the gentlemanly character, I was led to say, 'If a gentleman is to grow up he must grow like a tree: there must be nothing between him and heaven.'"—*Archd. Hare.*

*b* "The root meaning of the word used is 'places *outside* the city.'"—*Perowne.*

c De. xxxiii. 27, 29.

*d G. Brooks.*

*v.* 12. *Bp. Kennett*, 47; *Dr. J. Erskine*, ii. 362; *S. Lavington*, 158.

*vv.* 13, 14. *Jon. Steift*, ii. 159.

*v.* 15. *Dr. J. Donne*, iii. 328; *Bp. Beveridge*, vi. 413; *Bishop J. Thomas*, ii. 317; *Abp. Drummond*, 37; *Dr. J. Disney*, i. 195.

*e Hervey.*

great council of the nation in parliament; by each and all of these labouring to remove temptations to evil, to make good easier and more honoured, to confirm faith and holiness in others by their own example; in a word, to make men love and glorify their God and Saviour when they see the blessed fruits of His kingdom even here on earth.*c*

12—15. (12) that, *etc.*, this portion of the Ps. differs so manifestly in subject and style from the former part of the Ps. that many regard it as the addition of a later hand. grown up,*a* or grown large. corner stones, corner pillars, sculptured pillars, abiding in the house and giving grace and strength to the interior. Some think the elaborately carved corners, or cornices, are meant. polished, Heb. *cut, carved.* Read, "cut to grace a palace." (13) all . . store, Heb. *from kind to kind.* streets, should be "pastures."*b* (14) no breaking in, of hostile armies, nor going out, or sallying against besiegers. no complaining, as of a besieged city. (15) happy, *etc.*, that people to whom God graciously grants temporal safety and prosperity.*c*

*The happiness of God's people* (*v.* 15).—I. The elements of which the happiness of God's people consists. 1. Peace; 2. Love; 3. Hope. II. The attributes by which the happiness of God's people is distinguished. 1. It is substantial; 2. Intense; 3. Uninterrupted; 4. Holy; 5. Ever-during. III. The objections which are brought against the happiness of God's people. 1. Has not religion its sorrows? 2. Its restraints? 3. Its perils and persecutions? 4. Its disappointments?*d*

*Where is happiness to be found?*—If the Scriptures are a delusion, where shall we seek our happiness? In wealth? it is a splendid encumbrance. In honour? it is a glittering bubble. In the pleasures of the world? they are like the brine of the ocean to a thirsty palate—will irritate rather than satisfy. In gay, entertaining company? this is only a temporary opiate, not a lasting cure. But in the precious promises of the Gospel, and its renewing energy on our hearts, in the discoveries of God's love to poor sinners, in the displays of God's infinitely rich grace, and in the hope of His everlasting glory: in these grand specifics, for preparing and dispensing which revelation has the patent, true health, ease, and felicity are to be found.*e*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-FIFTH.*

author, unknown

*Praise of the all-bountiful King.*

The last of the alphabetical Psalms.

*a* "The heart lifted up to God, and full of the thoughts of God, can no more conceive that its praise should cease, than that God Himself

1—3. (1) O king, the real King of the nation of Israel: all its governors were but princes under Jehovah, the great King. ever and ever, comp. Ps. xxx. 12, xxxiv. 1.*a* (2) every day, each new day finding a new occasion, and new reasons. (3) to be praised, Ps. xlviii. 1. unsearchable, comp. Is. xl. 28; Ro. xi. 33.

*Praise for goodness and mercy* (*vv.* 1, 2).—David determines to praise his God, and celebrates—I. The perfections of His nature, mentioning—1. His greatness; 2. His goodness; 3. His mercy. II. The administration of His government. The kingdom of Christ is—1. Glorious; 2. Everlasting. III. The operation of His grace. 1. How gracious; 2. How righteous. Apply:—(1) What an elevation of character does true religion produce! (2) What loss do they sustain who live far off from God![b]

*The unsearchableness of God.*—Though the sun is the source and fountain of light, there is little good in gazing at the sun, except to get blinded. No one ever saw the better for looking the sun directly in the face. It is a child's trick: grown-up people know better. We use the light which the sun gives to see by, and to search into all things—the sun excepted. Him we cannot explore beyond what he reveals of himself in the light and heat which he sheds upon us, and in the colours by which he is reflected from the earth. There is no searching of the sun: our eyes are too weak. How much less can we search the sun's Creator, before whom the myriads of suns are but as so many cloud-bodies![c]

should cease to be."—*Peroune.*
*b C. Simeon, M.A. John Boys, Works,* 937.
*v. i. Dr. E. Payson,* iii. 337.
*v. 2. Dr. S. Clarke,* 109.
*v. 3. Dr. J. Sibbald,* 14; *Bp. Beveridge,* vii. 49
*c J. Pulsford.*

4—7. (4) one . . another, lit. *generation to generation.* (5) speak, or meditate upon. De Wette says, "rehearse in poetry." (6) declare, or rehearse each one of them. (7) abundantly utter,[a] pour forth as from a fountain. sing, loudly, joyfully.

*The perpetuity of praise.*—In the old time kings forwarded their despatches by running footmen, of whom there were relays (see Job ix. 25; Jer. li. 31; 2 Chron. xxx. 6—10; Est. iii. 13—15). The statutes, ordinances, etc., of the Bible, are the despatches of the great King. The generations, as they succeed each other, are the running footmen. The despatches are words of love and mercy. The runners read and publish as they advance. I. This work of preserving and handing down the truth is amongst the very first religious duties that concerned the mind and heart of man. 1. Oral teaching. A patriarch's household (Gen. xviii. 19). It was a Divinely enforced duty (Deut. vi.; Is. xxxviii. 19). 2. Presently the pen of historian, etc., employed. Moses, Samuel, etc. II. This work is no less important than ancient. 1. Human happiness involved (Ps. lxxviii. 1—8). 2. Glory of God advanced. 3. Hence Providence has, at different times, raised up supplementary aid to ensure its performance. To the father of each family was added the prophet, scribe, etc., and to these, in more modern times, various organisations, notably the missionary society and the Sunday school. III. This work, so ancient and important, is an ever-present duty. 1. It belongs to the present generation no less than to those of the past. 2. The world's progress in morality built up by the workers of all ages. We must lay a stone or two. We owe it to the past. Buildings for lack of constant repair fall into ruin. IV. This work, being religious, has to overcome great difficulties. 1. Various phases of scepticism. 2. Folly, etc., in the heart of childhood. 3. Home influence is often bad. V. This work requires special qualifications in the worker. Not so much mental as moral. 1. Love of God and Christ (John xxi. 15). 2. Love of the truth. 3. Love of souls. VI. This work is accompanied by special encouragements. 1. The promises of God. 2. The help of God. 3. The historical position of Sunday schools. 4. The fruit of our work in our churches, pulpits, senate house, etc. 5. The improved moral tone of society. 6. The glorious future present to the eye of faith.[b]

*a* Comp. Da. iv. 37, vi. 26, 27.

"Some men make a womanish complaint, that it is a great misfortune to die before our time. I would ask what time? Is it that of Nature? But she, indeed, has lent us life, as we do a sum of money, only no certain day is fixed for payment. What reason then to complain if she demands it at pleasure, since it was on this condition you received it?"—*Cicero.*

*b J. C. Gray, Sketch of S. S. Sermon.*

"Proud professors, who do not lay the whole stress of their salvation upon Christ, but would mingle their dross with His gold, their duties with His merits, this is to steal a jewel from Christ's crown, and implicitly to deny Him to be a perfect Saviour."—*Watson.*

8, 9. (8) gracious, Ex. xxxiv. 6, 7. great mercy, great in mercy, Ps. ciii. 8. (9) all his works, Ps. ciii. 22. Reference is to the "entirety of things created."

*The goodness of God to man* (*vv.* 8, 9).—I. The character of

*a C. Simeon, M.A.* Faith is a queenly grace, and is always attended by a large retinue.

God as here portrayed. Let us view it—1. Generally; 2. In our own particular experience. II. The reflections naturally suggested by it. We cannot but see here—1. Our base ingratitude; 2. Our awful desert; 3. The extreme folly of not turning to God.[a]—*Errors respecting the Divine Being* (*v.* 9).—Our text is an epitome. I. Let us see what it means. See the goodness of God.—1. As creator; 2. Under the law; 3. In the age of Solomon and the temple; 4. Under the prophets; 5. Under the Gospel. II. Views that are inconsistent with this view and hence erroneous. 1. That represents God as of implacable wrath; 2. His goodness as partial and limited; 3. Views of the decrees; 4. Goodness as only obtainable by sacrifice; 5. That God can be made good by some acts of ours; 6. That God will be good in the highest sense only to a very few. Jesus the great manifestation of the goodness of God.[b]

10—13. (10) **saints**, or beloved ones:[a] called to be holy. (11, 12) **mighty acts**, acts indicating august and Divine power. (13) **everlasting kingdom**, or kingdom running on through all the ages. There is no beginning and passing to God's kingdom: He ever rules.

*The glory of Christ's kingdom* (*v.* 11).—The glory of Christ's kingdom is manifested—I. In its origin—infinite mercy and grace, before the foundation of the world, that the Son of God should become incarnate—doctrines of Gospel the grand instruments of increase. II. In the manner and spirit of its administration—justice most conspicuous, benign and gracious, individual interests consulted, its Monarch disinterested. III. In the character of its subjects—enlightened, renewed, prepared for perfect blessedness. IV. In the privileges attached to it—peace, dignity, immortality, growth, perpetuity. Apply:—1. Pray and labour for its advancement; 2. Press into it.[b]

14—17. (14) **upholdeth**, *etc.*. His providential care is as minute and precise as it is extensive and glorious.[a] (15) **wait**, looking, watching with expectation. (16) **thine hand**, represented as holding the supply of every creature's need. (17) **holy**,[b] better, *merciful*.

*Comprehensiveness of Divine provision* (*v.* 15).—Man and beast dependent on the Divine care. God's provision for the world is—I. Universal in its extent: "the eyes of all." II. Suitable in its supply: "due season." III. Communicated with infinite ease: "openest Thine hand." IV. Contributes to the satisfaction of its recipients: "and satisfieth, etc."[c]

*Rev. Dr. Carey.*—The Rev. T. T. Thomason, referring to the fire which, in 1812, consumed the missionary premises at Serampore, says, "I could scarcely believe the report: it was like a blow on the head, which stupefies. I flew to Serampore to witness the desolation. The scene was, indeed, affecting. The immense printing-office, two hundred feet long, and fifty broad, reduced to a mere shell. The yard covered with burnt quires of paper, the loss in which article was immense. Carey walked with me over the smoking ruins. The tears stood in his eyes. 'In one short evening,' said he, 'the labours of years are consumed. How unsearchable are the ways of God! I had lately brought some things to the utmost perfection of which they seemed capable, and contemplated the missionary establishment

*v.* 8. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 258.
*vv.* 8, 9. *J. Gale*, i. 249; *W. Scott*, 124.
*v.* 9. *Bp. Andrewes*, iv. 318; *I. Barrow*, iii 514; *Abp. Tillotson*, viii. 237; *Dr. R. South*, viii. 62; *Dr. Whitby*, ii. 157; *Dr. S. Clarke*, i. 321; *Dr. J. Leland*, ii. 277; *Dr. J. Jortin*, i. 91; *W. Langhorne*, i. 184.
*b Dr. J. Burns.*

*a* Ps. xvi. 10.

*b R. Hall.*

*vv.* 10, 11. *J. H. Newman*, iv. 190.

*vv.* 10—13. *Hon. H. M. Villiers*, vi. 404.

*v.* 11. *A. Booth*, ii. 233.

*v.* 13. *J. Buckworth*, 65; *H. Melvill*, i.

*a* "Wherein is the conspicuous excellence of this kingdom seen? Not in the symbols of earthly pride and power, but in gracious condescension to the fallen and the crushed, in a gracious care which provides for the wants of every living thing."—*Perowne.*

*b* Re. xv. 3, 4.

*c J. B. Dodd. Dr. M. Hole*, ii. 83; *G. J. Zollikofer*, ii. 374.

*v.* 17. *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 61; *Dr. Whitby*, ii. 55; *Dr. W. S. Done*, i.; *Dr. J. Leland*, ii. 327; *F. Hunter*, i. 1; *G. J. Zollikoffer*, ii. 47.

with, perhaps, too much self-congratulation. The Lord has laid me low, that I may look more simply to Him. Return now to thy books; regard God in all thou doest. Learn Arabic with humility. Let God be exalted in all thy plans, and purposes, and labours: He can do without thee.' Who could stand in such a place, at such a time, with such a man, without feelings of sharp regret and solemn exercises of mind! I saw the ground strewed with half-consumed paper, on which, in the course of a very few months, the words of life would have been printed. The metal under our feet, amidst the ruins, was melted into misshapen lumps—the sad remains of beautiful types consecrated to the service of the sanctuary. All was smiling and promising a few hours before; now all was vanished into smoke, and converted to rubbish!"[d]

18—21. (18) nigh, so both able and ready to meet every occasion of need. in truth, *i.e.* sincerely. (19) fulfil the desire, we know that such expressions are not to be taken absolutely; God answers according to His own wise and beneficent will. (20) will he destroy, or better, he destroys, is accustomed to destroy. The judgments of God aid the confidence of His servants in Him. (21) holy name,[a] Ps. xxxiii. 21, ciii. 1, cv. 3.

*The denial of human desires* (*v.* 19).—It is our mercy that God does not grant us every desire. 1. For some are sinful; 2. Others not for our good; 3. Nay, not every righteous desire, as David's to build the temple, as kings and prophets to see Messiah's days. But the substance of good desires shall be fulfilled.[b]—*The fate of those who love God and of the wicked* (*v.* 20).—I. Those who love God will be preserved by Him. Such are—1. Reconciled to Him; 2. Think highly of Him; 3. Speak frequently to Him; 4. Labour to imitate Him; 5. Are pleased to obey Him. II. The wicked, etc. They are known by—1. Contempt of His authority: 2. Violation of His law; 3. Hatred of the righteous. III. Their destruction. 1. All their sources of carnal pleasure; 2. All capacity for intellectual gratification; 3. By infliction of positive punishment. Apply:—(1) We see here the character and privileges of the righteous; (2) The fearful end of the wicked.[c]

*The dying scholar and praying mother.*—A boy, at the age of twelve years, was stricken with disease. In a day or two he became delirious. One of the teachers called upon the mother, and found her in tears respecting her son. He asked the mother what hope she had of her son's eternal well-being. She replied, "Well, sir, he was always a good boy, but I have had no certain evidence of a change of heart. I do pray that the Lord will restore him to consciousness before he dies, that we may have some evidence that he has gone to be with Jesus." The mother's prayer was answered. A few hours before he died he opened his eyes, as though awakening from a dream, and said, "Yes, I'm coming! I'm coming!" And when his mother spoke to him, he said, "Don't stop me, mother." Shortly after this, he raised himself in bed, stretched out his wasted arms, and, looking up to heaven with a radiant smile, said, "Yes, I'm coming! I'm coming!" And as he said it, his spirit departed to that land where poverty and pain are never known.

"A wicked man's prayer is sick of the plague, and God will not come near him. The loadstone loseth its virtue when it is bespread with garlick; so doth prayer when it is polluted with sin."—*T. Watson.*

*d R. T. S.*

*a* Re. v. 13.

*b A. Fuller.*

*c Beta* in 400 Sks.

"I respect the man who knows distinctly what he wishes. The greater part of all the mischief in the world arises from the fact that men do not sufficiently understand their own aims. They have undertaken to build a tower, and spend no more labour on the foundation than would be necessary to erect a hut."—*Goethe.*

"Like our shadows, our wishes lengthen as our sun declines."—*Young.*

*v.* 18. *E. Blencowe*, i. 128.
*vv.* 18, 19. *Dr. H. Draper*, ii. 20-; *W. Howorth*, 147.

Never conclude that a sinner is not penitent because he has not experienced the same depth of conviction as yourself.

author,—poss. Haggai, or Zechariah

*A call to trust wholly in God.*

*a* "As a fit prelude to these Psalms of praise the Psalmist attunes his own soul to that work of praise in which he summons all creation to join." —*Spk. Com.*

*b* Ps. xxxiii. 2, xcviii. 5, 6, cxlix. 3.

*c* "His life shall be a thanksgiving unto the power that made him."—*Perowne.*

*d* Ps. cvii. 40, cxviii. 9.

*e R. Cecil.*

*a* "It is a characteristic of these Ps. to proclaim to all nations which worshipped idols, that 'the God of Jacob,' 'the God of Zion,' is the Creator and Governor of all things; and to make an appeal to all nations to turn to Him."—*Wordsworth.*

*b* "This is, in fact, the central thought of the Psalm. For on this ground beyond all others is God the object of trust. He is true, and His word is truth, and that word He keeps not for a time, but for ever."—*Perowne.*

*c Jennings and Lowe.*

*d* Ps. lxi. 1.

*e C. Simeon, M.A.*

*f Whitecross.*

*a* The several works of mercy enumerated in

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SIXTH.*

1—4. (1) praise, better. *Hallelujah*, the term characteristic of this series of Psalms. They begin and end with the same expression. O my soul, Ps. ciii. 22.[a] (2) sing praises, or play upon an instrument,[b] have any being, lit. *while I yet (am).*[c] (3) princes, Heb. *nedibim*, meaning primarily, *freewill givers*, or *benefactors*. The inability to render assistance, not the capriciousness of earthly potentates, is mainly in view.[d] no help, or power to save. (4) returneth, *etc.*, Ge. ii. 7. thoughts, or purposes.

*A Christian can always praise God.*—How blessed is the Christian in the midst of his greatest troubles! It is true we cannot say he is perfect in holiness—that he has never any doubts, that his peace of mind is never interrupted, that he never mistakes Providence; but, after all, his is a blessed condition, for he is supported under his trials, and instructed by the discipline; and as to his fears, the evil, under the apprehension of which he is ready to sink, frequently does not come, or it does not continue, or it is turned into a blessing.[e]

5—7. (5) God of Jacob, declared in *special* revelation to the family of Jacob,[a] in general revelation shown as Creator of heaven and earth, etc. hope, *etc.*, Je. xvii. 7; Ps. xxxiii. 12. (6) which made, *etc.*, comp. Ac. iv. 24. keepeth truth, is faithful. To this attribute prominence is given.[b] "From the omnipotence of God the Psalmist passes to His faithfulness, then to His righteousness, and then to His bounteousness and graciousness."[c] (7) looseth, with prob. reference to release fr. Bab. captivity.[d]

*The blessedness of trusting in God* (*v.* 5).—How exalted the frame of the Psalmist's mind at the time he penned these words. We shall first—I. Confirm his testimony. 1. However numerous and powerful his enemies, he can never be overcome; 2. However enlarged his expectations he can never be disappointed. II. Commend it to your especial attention. 1. Seek to know the character of Jehovah as here drawn; 2. Seek to obtain an interest in Him as your God; 3. Make use of Him for all the ends for which He has given Himself to you.[e]

*Trusting in God.*—In the spring of 1807, a young man, who had lately suffered the amputation of one of his legs, asked alms at the door of a poor but pious widow in Whitby. She invited him into her house to warm himself; and, after some conversation, presented him with a farthing, the last, and indeed the only money she possessed in the world. Shortly afterwards, a gentleman called to inquire after her. At his departure he put half-a-crown into her hand; and being almost overpowered by this unexpected present, the tears flowing plentifully from her eyes, the gentleman asked the cause of her excessive joy, when she simply related what had passed, and he rejoiced with her, that Providence had sent him to pay the interest for her loan, and relieve her in the time of need.[f]

8—10. (8) openeth, *etc.*, comp. Is. xlii. 7. Reference may be either to physical helplessness, or spiritual want of discernment.[a] (9) strangest, *etc.*, in this *v.* three great examples of

natural defencelessness are taken, strangers, widow, fatherless,[b] relieveth, or establishes, sets upright. upside down, or aside. This is done in the wise ordering of Div. Providence. (10) reign, or shall be king.

*Help in trouble.*—A Christian widow was thrown into circumstances of trial over which she had no control, and menaced with pecuniary difficulties which it seemed an utter impossibility for her to meet. The case, which might have seemed a hopeless one to others, was not allowed to burden her, and she was enabled to cast it on Him whose hand was not shortened that it could not save. She could not limit Him. Two bills were to be met on a certain day, which amounted unitedly to fifty pounds. The morning for payment actually dawned, and still the widow felt assured that guidance or deliverance would come, and not be too late, and the words, "He relieveth the fatherless and widow," dwelt much upon her mind. The post arrived, and a letter bearing a foreign post-mark was placed in her hand. It was from India, and she did not at first even recognise the handwriting. On opening it a note for fifty pounds fell out. It was money of her own, which had been sent to that country on her arrival in England. Now, through the love of God's children, or by some other means, it was returned, with the announcement that it was not needed. He who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working, had brought the needful help thousands of miles, to be ready the very hour and moment even of the widow's necessity.

these verses were combined in the personal ministry of our Lord.

*b* De. xviii.; Ps. lxviii. 5; Ja. i. 27.

*v.* 8. *I. Kimber*, 32.

*v.* 9. *D. Dickson*, 162.

"Life that has sorrow much and sorrow's cure, where they who most enjoy shall much endure."—*G. Crabbe.*

"No friendly voice speaks comfort to her soul, nor soft-eyed pity drops a melting tear."—*Robert Glynne.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-SEVENTH.*

author,—unknown: date, after return from exile

1–6. (1) praise is comely, "sweet and beautiful," Ps. xxxiii. 1. (2) build up, as at the return from captivity.[a] We may presume that this work was just completed. outcasts, better, *exiles:* those thrust out. (3) wounds, lit. *pains.* (4) telleth,[b] or apportioneth a number. This is a proof of His omniscience and omnipotence, and so of His ability to help His people. by names,[c] the sign of intimate and familiar knowledge. (5) is infinite, or "there is no number;" no numbering of it, Ps. cxlv. 3. (6) lifteth up, setteth up, establisheth. meek, Ps. xxii. 26.

*The greatness and gentleness of God* (*vv.* 2—5).—The text reveals the constructive side of the Divine character. I. As shown in the building up of the Church. That He should do so shows—1. That the Church is self-demolished; 2. That it is self-helpless; 3. That God is the Gatherer, Redeemer, Builder of the Church. II. As seen in the gentle care of human hearts. Learn from this—1. The personality of God's knowledge; 2. The infinite adaptations of Divine grace; 3. The perfectness of Divine healing. III. As seen in the order, the regularity, and the stability of creation. 1. God takes care of the universe: why should not I trust Him with my life? 2. Where God's will is unquestioned the result is all good: why should I oppose myself to its gracious dominion?[d]

*The advantage of praise.*—Praise is the believer's helper in his trials, and his companion after trial. Jehoshaphat's army sang praises before the battle; David sang praises in the cave; Daniel, when the trap was set for his life, prayed and gave thanks three times a day as usual; and Jesus, when He would raise Lazarus, first lift up His heart in thanks to the Father; and before He

*Praise to the Restorer of Jerusalem.*

*a* Ps. cxxii. 3.
*b* Is. xl. 26—29.
*c* Jno. x. 3.
*d Dr. Parker.*
*v.* 1. *Dr. W. Harris*, i. 30; *R. Farrington*, 161; *W. F. Vance*, 315; *Dr. Wordsworth*, 275.
*vv.* 1—4. *Dr. G. Townsend*, 126.
*v.* 3. *W. Fenner*, i. 223; *J. Garnons*, ii. 243; *T. Blackley*, ii. 82.
*v.* 5. *S. Charnock*, ii. 1; *Bp. Beveridge*, vii. 60; *Dr. Conant*, iv. 495; *J. Abernethy*, i. 288; *J. Hunt*, i. 155; *Dr. S. Clark*, i. 197.
It was a fine reply that a pupil of the Deaf and Dumb Institution of Paris

made to the following question, put by a gentleman visiting it, "What is eternity?" "It is the lifetime of the Almighty!"

went to supper, first sang a hymn. So is praise also our solace after trial. Music is sweetest when heard over rivers, where the echo thereof is best rebounded by the waters: and praise for pensiveness, thanks for tears, blessing God over the floods of affliction, makes the sweetest music in the ears of heaven.

7—11. (7) **seeing**, lit. *answer*, as in the responses of a liturgical service: "answer one another." (8) **on the mountains**, where man does not plough or sow seeds. (9) **giveth**, *etc.*, as Job xxxviii. 41.[a] (10) **of a horse**, with reference to its use in battle: as the strength of Egypt lay in its horses and chariots, this fig. is used, generally, for "carnal security."[b] **legs of a man**, wh. he may trust to enable him to flee fr. the battle-field. Put for *self-confidence*. (11) **hope in**, wait for His mercy.

*Hope and fear balanced* (*v.* 11).—We must keep up both hope and fear. I. As to the concerns of our souls, and our spiritual and eternal state—1. A holy dread of God and a holy delight in Him; 2. A trembling for sin and a triumphing in Christ; 3. Jealousy of ourselves, and thankful sense of God's grace; 4. Caution of our ways, and trust in God's; 5. Holy fear lest we come short, and good hope that we shall persevere. II. As to our temporal concerns—1. Balance the hopes which sense suggests with the fears that religion teaches; 2. Keep up an awful regard for Divine sovereignty; 3. When the world frowns upon us we must have a good hope. III. As to public concern of the Church of God, and of our own land and nation—1. We have cause to fear, for we are a provoking people; 2. We must keep up a good hope in public affairs. We are encouraged by—(1) God's Word; (2) His work among us; (3) The wonders He hath wrought for us.[c]

12—16. (12) **praise**, here "praise aloud." (13) **strengthened**, the wall was complete, and the gates fixed. Poss. this Ps. was prepared for thanksgiving service on the completion of the work.[a] (14) **peace**, comp. Is. lx. 17. **finest of the wheat**, lit. *fat of the wheat*;[b] Ps. lxxxi. 16. (15) **runneth**, the word being figuratively treated as if it was a messenger. (16) **snow like wool**, snow-flakes like flocks of wool covering the fields.[c]

*Jehovah blessing the children of Zion* (*v.* 13).—This spoken of God's Church. I. The people of heavenly birth, they are introduced sooner or later into the family—known by their life and likeness. II. The unction communicated, the first communication of blessedness in their obtaining mercy, the furtherance of that mercy in their experience. III. A record is to be given of it, that all parties may read. IV. The exultation.[d]

17—20. (17) **ice**, *i.e.* hail. **morsels**, hailstones.[a] (18) **melteth them**, the waters frozen by the cold.[b] (19) **his word**, better, *words:* His lively "oracles." (20) **not dealt so**, De. iv. 7, 32—41.[c]

*Britain's privileges and obligations* (*v.* 20).—I. Observe the valuable privileges and blessings we enjoy as a people. 1. Our liberty: 2. Our political power: 3. The diffusion amongst us of the Word of God; 4. The number and influence of pious men. II. That thus we are placed under weighty obligations to the God by whom they are bestowed. 1. The obligation to the cultivation of gratitude: 2. Exercise of repentance; 3. Diffusion of truth; 4. Exercise of prayer.[d]

*National comparisons.*—Mr. Vaughan in his travels through

*a* Ps. civ. 27, 28; Lu. xii. 24. The references to Job throughout this Ps. are numerous.

*b* "In all those things to which the God-estranged self-confidence of man so readily clings, God has no delight and no pleasure."—*Delitzsch.* Ps. xx. 7, xxxiii. 16, 17; Pr. xxi. 31; Ho. i. 7.

*c* *Matt. Henry.* Dewdrops at night are diamonds at morn; so the tears we weep here may be pearls in heaven.

*v.* 11. *T. Boston*, ix. 66.

*a* Neh. vii. 3.

*b* For orig. promise of plenty, see De. xxii. 13, 14.

*c* "He wraps the earth in snow as in a warm white woollen garment, and scatters the frost so that the trees, etc., appear as if powdered with ashes blown about by the wind."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

*d* *J. Irons.*

*a* Job xxxvii. 10.

*b* "Israel in the captivity had been ice-bound, like ships of Arctic voyagers in the Polar Sea; but God sent forth the vernal breeze of His love, and the water flowed, the ice melted, and they were re-

Sicily, having stopped to take some refreshment at an inn in Caltagirone, as he sat down to his chicken, the landlady very coolly took a chair within a yard of the table, and on the opposite side sat a sleek-looking priest, such as you see familiar in every house throughout the country, who had taken up that position by way of asking a few questions of the *Cavaliere Inglese*. "After many apologies for the liberty he was taking, the latter," says Mr. Vaughan, "begged to converse with me on the subject of England, which the people of these parts were very anxious to hear about, and the opportunity of inquiring so seldom occurred; and by the time I had dined, I observed half a dozen people collected round the door, with their eyes and mouths open, to hear the examination. 'And pray, signor, is it true what we are told, that you have no olives in England?' 'Yes, perfectly true.' 'Cospetto! how so?' 'Cospettone!' said the landlady. 'Our climate is not propitious to the growth of the olive.' 'But then, signor, for oranges?' 'We have no oranges neither.' 'Poveretto!' said the landlady, with a tone of compunction, which is a sort of fondling diminutive of 'Povero,' 'poor creature;' as you would say to your child, 'Poor little manikin!' 'But how is that possible, signor?' said the priest; 'have you no fruit in your country?' 'We have very fine fruit: but our winters are severe, and not genial enough for the orange tree.' 'That is just what they told me,' said the lady, at Palermo, that England is all snow, and a great many stones.' 'But then, signor, we have heard what we can scarcely believe, that you have no wine?' 'It is perfectly true; we have vines that bear fruit; but the sun in our climate is not sufficiently strong, which must be broiling, as it is here, to produce any wine.' 'Then, Jesu Maria, how do you do?' I told them that, notwithstanding, we got on pretty well; that we had some decent sort of mutton, and very tolerable-looking beef; that our poultry was thought eatable; and our bread pretty good; that, instead of the wine, we had a thing called ale, which our people here and there seem to relish exceedingly; and that by the help of these articles, a good constitution, and the blessing of God, our men were as hardy and as loyal and brave, and our women as accomplished and virtuous and handsome, as any other people, I believed, under heaven. 'Besides, Mr. Abbate, I beg leave to ask you, what cloth is your coat of?' 'Cospetto! it is English' (with an air of importance). 'And your hat?' 'Why, that's English.' 'And this lady's gown, with her bonnet and ribbons?' 'Why, they are English.' 'All English. Then you see how it is; we send you, in exchange for what we don't grow, half the comforts and conveniences you enjoy in your island; besides, padrona mia gentile! (my agreeable landlady) we can never regret that we don't grow these articles, since it ensures us an intercourse with a nation we esteem!' '*Viva!*' said the landlady; and '*Bravo!*' said the priest; and between *bravo* and *viva*, the best friends in the world, I escaped to my lettiga!'"

leased."—*Wordsworth.*

*c* He. iv. 1, 2.

*d J. Parsons.*

"Some natural tears they dropped, but wiped them soon. The world was all before them, where to choose their place of rest, and Providence their guide."—*Milton.*

*vv.* 16—18. *J. Clapp*, iii. 211.

*vv.* 19, 20. *N. Parkhurst*, i. 103; *Dr. J. Jortin*, iii. 173; *E. Nares*, 445; *I. B. S. Carwithen*, 143.

*v.* 20. *J. Alliene*, 127; *Dr. E. Maynard*, 293; *J. Brydone*, iv. 287.

"Those who know the value of human life know the importance of a year, a day, and even an hour; and these when spent amid the full enjoyment of the vital functions, of how much importance to our whole existence! It is therefore an eternal and irreparable loss, when time is not enjoyed as it ought to be."—*Struve.*

"A common pity does not love express; pity is love when grown into excess."—*Sir H. Howard.*

*e Percy Anec.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-EIGHTH.*

author,—unknown: date, as prev. Psalm

1—6. (1) from the heavens, or, O ye of the heavens: including both things and beings. heights, the regions lifted up. (2) angels, conceived as attending on God in heaven.

*All creatures called to praise God.*

*a* De. x. 14; 1 Ki. viii. 27.

*b* "God has engraven a law on all His works, regulates their mutual relations, and none of them transgresses it."—*Spk. Com.*

*Dr. J. Everard, Gosp. Treas.* 523; *Dr. M. Hole*, i. 196.

*v.* 2. *Dr. F. Hutchinson, Essay concerning Witchcraft*, 312.

*c Dr. Thomas.*

*a* "Sea monsters, mentioned first because at the bottom of the scale in creation."—*Peroune.* Ps. lxxiv. 13.

*vv.* 7. 8. *J. J. Blunt*, 93.

*v.* 8. *J. Malham*, 261.

"Though we seem grieved at the shortness of life in general, we are wishing every period of it at an end. The minor longs to be at age; then to be a man of business; then to make up an estate; then to arrive at honours; then to retire."—*Addison.*

*b Burnet.*

*a G. Brooks.* A poor man who had been a follower of Jesus about twelve

hosts, the heavenly bodies, described in the next verse. (3) stars of light, the light of the stars was the chief thing noticed. What the stars really are was, and is still, a mystery. (4) heaven of heavens, denoting the boundless depths of the heavens.[a] waters, Ge. i. 7. (5) commanded, Ps. xxxiii. 6. (6) decree, *etc.*, Job xxviii. 26.[b]

*God's wonderful knowledge.*—Astronomers inform us that one hundred millions of stars may be seen through the telescope in our sky, and that each of them is the centre of a system, and has, therefore, a sky of its own, incalculably deeper and broader than these vast heavens that encircle us. In this supposition there is involved a number of "stars" which no arithmetic can compute, and which baffles all imagination in the attempt to appreciate. But this, it would seem, after all, is nothing compared with the immeasurable universe. Yet these stars, though they cover immensity thick as grass on earth's soil, or as sands on ocean's shore, are all known to God. "He telleth the number," etc. He knows the age, productions, size, velocity, influence, and tenants of each. "Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number; He calleth them all by names." He marshals them as the general his battalions, "He binds the sweet influences of Pleiades, and He looses the bands of Orion. He bringeth forth Mazzaroth in his season, and He guides Arcturus with his sons." [c]

7—10. (7) dragons, general term for any large water-animals.[a] all deeps, contents of deep places, or seas. (8) fire, *i.e.* lightning. vapours, fogs and mists. stormy wind, Ps. cvii. 25. (9) fruitful trees, *i.e.* fruit trees, as distinguished from forest trees. cedars, the king, and type of forest trees. (10) flying fowl, *Heb.* birds of wing.

*Particular Providence.*—We cannot imagine a Providence, unless we believe everything to be within its care and view. The only difficulty that has been made in apprehending this has arisen from the narrowness of men's minds, who have measured God rather by their own measure and capacity, than by that of infinite perfection, which, as soon as it is considered, will put an end to all further doubtings about it. When we perceive that a vast number of objects enter in at our eye by a very small passage, and yet are so little jumbled in that crowd, that they open themselves regularly, though there is no great space for that neither; and that they give us a distinct apprehension of many objects that lie before us, some even at a vast distance from us, both of their nature, colour, and size; and by a secret geometry, from the angles that they make in our eye, we judge of the distance of all objects, both from us and from one another; if to this we add the vast number of figures, that we receive and retain long and with great order in our brains, which we easily fetch up either in our thoughts or in our discourses: we shall find it less difficult to apprehend how an infinite mind should have the universal view of all things, ever present before it.[b]

11—14. (11) kings, *etc.*, beginning with the noblest, and gathering up all classes. (12, 13) excellent, or exalted. (14) horn, the sign of dignity, prosperity, and pre-eminence. near unto him, so the subject of gracious and peculiar interest. De iv. 7.

*A people near to God* (*v.* 14).—They are near to Him—I. Because they are reconciled to Him by faith in Christ. II. Because they live in habitual communion with Him. III. Because they seek conformity to Him. IV. Because they enjoy His protection. V. Because they shall be with Him for ever.[a]—*Praising God* (*v.* 12).—Book of Psalms concludes with general exhortations to praise God. In this Psalm creatures, men and angels, are exhorted to do so. Children are to praise God. I. What is it to praise God? To fulfil the end for which they are created. In this way sun, moon, stars, etc., are to praise Him. The end of a child's creation is higher. He has a heart and mind. He is to love what is good, know what is true, do what is right, use his powers in God's service. Speech, influence, example. To praise God is to speak well of Him (ill. praising a good child is speaking favourably of him). It also includes adoration, worship, etc. II. Why should children praise God? In Him they live, etc. Every good thing (parents, schools, etc.) from Him. The habit of praising God in practical goodness, formed in early life, will make after religion easy and pleasant. Special reasons for children's praise. Providence taking care of youth. Much in the Bible for the instruction of youth. Jesus loves good children. God's promises. III. When should children praise God? Always. By being always thoughtful and good, truthful and honest, for the sake of pleasing God. By believing in Jesus as God's Son and our Saviour. By speaking good of His name and people amongst their friends. By singing His praise in His house, etc. Hint:—The praise on earth introductory to the worship of heaven.[b]

months thus spoke of the advantage he had derived from religion since he had embraced it: "This year I have had a good crop on my little piece of land; I have got a fat pig in my sty, and some money in my pocket; last year this time I had nothing; the whole went to the public-house. I know religion is a good thing for body as well as soul." *Dr. T. Horton*, 208. *v.* 12. *C. Marriott*, ii. 502. *v.* 13. *Dr. W. Shart*, 446; *G. Burnet*, i. 265. *v.* 14. *B. Beddome*, iii. 44. *b Hive.*

## *PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FORTY-NINTH.*

1—4. (1) new song, comp. Ps. xxxiii. 3. in the congregation, now assembling in the restored temple. (2) made him, constituted him a people. (3) in the dance, or *with the pipe.* timbrel, Ex. xv. 20. (4) beautify, or make glorious. meek, prob. here, the afflicted or oppressed.[a]

*The Lord's pleasure in His people* (*v.* 4).—I. The people. 1. Have a special relation to God; 2. Are regenerated and sanctified by His spirit; 3. Conformed to His image; 4. Zealous for His glory. II. The pleasure God has in them. 1. In their persons; 2. Their welfare; 3. Their services; 4. Their graces; 5. Their fellowship.[b]

author,— as two prev. Psalms

*Subject, zeal for the cause of Jehovah.*

*a* Is. lxi. 1, 10. *b G. Brooks. v.* 2. *T. Bradbury*, i. 29. *v.* 3. *E. Cooper*, vii. 398.

5—9. (5) joyful in glory, *i.e.* in the glory or beauty wh. God confers upon them. upon their beds, "where before, in the loneliness of night, they consumed themselves with grief for their shame."[a] (6) sword, *see* Ne. iv. 17, 18. "A revival of the old military spirit of the nation." (7) heathen, as such the surrounding tribes were regarded by the returned exiles. (8, 9) bind, *etc.*, the reference is prob. rather prophetical, applying to the moral subduing of the nations under the power of the Gospel, than having regard to further national conquests. this honour, better, He, Jehovah, is an honour to all His saints.[b]

*a Hengstenberg.* Ho. vii. 14.

*b* Or it may mean, this honour, the work of subjecting heathen nations.

*The Lord the liberator* (*v.* 7).—I. From the common prison—the ward of sin. II. The solitary cell—the place of penitence. III. The silent cell, where He met with people who could not pray. IV. The cell of ignorance. V. The prison of habit. VI.

*v.* 6. *S. Bishop*, 80; *F. Skurray*, 97.

*v.* 9. *Dr. M. Frank*, ii. 336; *Dr. H. Hibber*, 137; *Dr. N. Marshall*, iii. 474.

c C. H. Spurgeon.

The hard labour room. VII. The low dungeon of despondency. VII. The inner prison—the hold of despair. IX. The devil's torture-chamber. X. The condemned cell.[c]

## PSALM THE HUNDRED AND FIFTIETH.

author, etc.,—as prev. three Psalms

*The general Hallelujah of animate creation.*

a J. Jackson, M.A.

W. Dunlop, 435; J. Reeve, i. 333.

v. 1. St. Augustine, Op. vii. 161; W. Jones, ii. 368; F. W. Fowle, i.

1, 2. (1) sanctuary, the restored temple, of which the returned captives were so proud. firmament, *etc.*, where His might and majesty are displayed. (2) for . . acts, in the recital of such actsas the Exodus, restoration from Bab., etc. excellent greatness, the abundance of His greatness.

*Praise* (*v.* 1).—I. It is difficult to conceive how any man who believes in God can need to be reminded of the duty of praise. II. In every age and country the adoration of the Supreme Being has risen with the illumination of the human mind, and borne a very exact proportion to its restoration in the Divine image. III. We may trace the gradual recovery of this taste for heavenly joys in the history of mankind as recorded in the Holy Scripture. IV. We may feel it to be equally true as regards each one. By this ascertain your advancement in the Divine life.[a]

3—6. (3) trumpet, cornet. (4) dance, or pipe. (5) cymbals, instruments which they clanged together.[a] (6) everything, lit. *all the* breath: the entirety of animate creatures.[b]

*The duty of praising God* (*v.* 6).—Be it known—I. That God deserves all imaginable praise from His creatures. II. There is not a thing that breathes which has not abundant reason to praise Him. 1. Those who yet are in heathen darkness; 2. Those who enjoy the light of revelation: 3. Those who are brought to saving knowledge of Christ. III. The more we abound in this blessed exercise the more exalted will our happiness be. Apply:—Who is there who has not something to praise God for?[b]

*Thanksgiving.*—Our whole life should speak forth our thankfulness; every condition and place we are in should be a witness of our thankfulness; this will make the time and places we live in the better for us. When we ourselves are monuments of God's mercy, it is fit we should be patterns of His praises, and leave monuments to others. We should think life is given to us to do something better than to live in: we live not to live; our life is not the end of itself, but the praise of the Giver. God hath joined His glory and our happiness together: it is fit that we should refer all that is good to His glory, who hath joined His glory to our best good in being glorified in our salvation (Ps. l. 14, cxvi. 17). Praise is a just and due tribute for all God's blessings; for what else do the best favours of God especially call for at our hands? How do all creatures praise God but by our mouths? It is a debt always owing, and always paying; and the more we pay the more we shall owe: upon the due discharge of this debt, the soul will find much peace. A thankful heart to God for His blessings is the greatest blessing of all. Were it not for a few gracious souls, what honour would God have of the rest of the unthankful world? which should stir us up the more to be trumpets of God's praises in the midst of His enemies: because this, in some sort, hath a prerogative above our praising God in heaven: for there God hath no enemies to dishonour Him.[c]

a "There were two kinds of cymbals; a species of small metal castanet, of high pitched tones; and another kind consisting of two large plates attached to each hand of the performer."—*Jennings and Lowe.*

b C. Simeon, M.A.

The duration of man's life should not be estimated by his years, but what he has accomplished—by the uses which he has made of time and opportunity. The industrious man lives longer than the drone, and by inuring our body and mind to exercise and activity we shall more than double the years of our existence.

c H. Sibbes.

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